



February 25, 2013

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Audubon Society of Portland and our 13,000 members in the Portland Metropolitan Region in support of Senate Bill 474 (Habituated Wildlife). We appreciate the willingness of Senator Olsen and Senator Hass to sponsor this legislation in the Oregon Senate and Representative Reardon for sponsoring it in the Oregon House. Deliberate feeding of raccoons is a significant problem in Oregon--on both our urban and rural landscapes.

Habituating certain wildlife species to human handouts can cause them to lose their instinctual fear of humans and begin associating humans with food. It can also lead to unnaturally large local wildlife populations that are unsustainable based on the available natural food and habitat. Finally drawing large numbers of certain wildlife species to the same location day after day can create disease vectors that result in local die-offs. Each of these situations increases the likelihood of negative interactions with people and property---a situation which is good for neither humans or wildlife.

Portland Audubon Society receives approximately 15,000 wildlife related phone calls each year at our urban wildlife resource office. Too many of these phone calls involve conflicts between humans and wildlife specifically precipitated by feeding of wildlife. Problems associated with habituated wild animals range from property damage, to serious disease outbreaks to direct attacks on humans. Addressing what are in many cases truly preventable situations costs tremendous resources and often results in the removal (either y relocation or lethal control) of the offending wildlife.

We urge you add raccoons to the list of "potentially habituated wildlife. Raccoons are without question one of the species of greatest concern because of their predilection to become habituated to human handouts combined with their potential to cause real harm to people and property once they become habituated. On average we deal with well over 100 complaints each year regarding habituation of raccoons.

Feeding causes raccoons to associate food with humans and to lose instinctual fear of people. Feeding of raccoons is particularly problematic because raccoon are only quasi-territorial and

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populations will tend to increase in a limited geographic area as food sources permit. A single person placing out large quantities of food can quickly cause dramatic increases in local population levels.

Along with the typical problems associated with habituation (loss of fear of people, aggressive behavior towards people and pets, property damage), raccoons pose an additional challenge. Raccoons are prone to periodic outbreaks of the Canine Distemper Virus as well as Parvo and other diseases. Canine Distemper is contagious to dogs as well as various other wildlife populations. At least 4 times over the past 18 years the Portland Metro Region has been hit with a significant outbreak of raccoon distemper. These outbreaks have been significantly exacerbated by intentional feeding of raccoons which creates elevated opportunities for disease transmission among raccoon populations as multiple raccoons are drawn to the same location day after day to access feeding stations. Audubon, ODFW and Multnomah County Animal Control have worked together to respond to these outbreaks and facilitate quick removal of diseased animals from the environment primarily because of the significant risks that sick, disoriented animals pose to humans on densely populated landscapes. Responding to these outbreaks is tremendously resource intensive. Problems with raccoons have become so acute that in 2006 ODFW adopted new administrative rules limiting relocation of problem raccoons due to the large number of animals being relocated (>800 in Portland in 2003) and their high potential to serve as a disease vector to vulnerable wildlife populations. Problem raccoons are now typically euthanized rather than relocated.

We view the addition of raccoons to the list of potentially habituated wildlife as a critical tool in the toolkit for addressing feeding of potentially habituated wildlife species. An ordinance alone will not solve the problem, but it does send a clear and strong message to the public that providing food for certain species is not appropriate and it provides agencies with the ability to enforce when education is not sufficient to deter feeding activities. We have found for example that the ability to inform the public that there are fines potentially associated with intentional feeding coyotes (another common problem) which were included under the original "No n Feed Ordinance (HB 2175) passed in 2011 has been tremendously helpful in dissuading even some of the most obstinate feeders to cease and desist without referred them on for enforcement. Over the past two years, Audubon has only referred a small handful of cases to State Police Game Division for follow-up. We are currently working with a variety of local, state and federal agencies to increase educational outreach resources available to address this topic and we expect that in the vast majority of situations, education alone will be sufficient to deter inappropriate behavior. Research has demonstrated however that the most effective programs are those that are backed by enforcement capabilities.

We respectfully urge you to add raccoons to the list of potentially habituated wildlife by passing SB 474.

Respectfully,



Bob Sallinger  
Conservation Director  
Audubon Society of Portland

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Vancouver B.C.

NOTICE

**NO FEEDING  
ALLOWED...**

Wild Animals Will Co-exist With Humans  
In The Urban Setting. But Familiarity  
Becomes A Danger To Both Animals  
& Humans

Bylaw 7422



**WILD ANIMALS ARE NOT PETS  
...RESPECT THEIR WILDNESS**



# URBAN WILDLIFE

TIPS TO ENJOY YOUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS AND DEAL WITH TROUBLESOME ONES

*Oregon is a special place, known for its natural features and its diverse and abundant wildlife. However, as human populations grow, the space left for wildlife shrinks, especially around urban areas. When their habitat, food and water sources disappear, "critters" look elsewhere for their basic needs - and sometimes that means your yard, attic, crawlspace or garage. In urban areas, parks and green spaces provide important wildlife habitat; but sometimes animals residing there are attracted to easy meals or living quarters near human dwellings. By making a few modifications to our behavior and our homes, most conflicts can be avoided.*

There are many parallels between wildlife needs and people needs. To understand why wild animals behave as they do, we need to see the world from their perspective.

It's easy to think that an animal will simply move "somewhere else" when people clear a piece of land to build a house, a road or a shopping mall. However, like people, many species need their "own space" and don't like to be crowded together. They have

homes and territories and don't like intruders moving in. Try to imagine a stranger moving in to share your home. A raccoon, for example, faces a choice when forced from its home: either try to squeeze into an area already occupied by another raccoon or move in with the new human neighbors. This is where conflict often begins. A critter takes up residence under your deck and eats the pet food on the porch. Or birds decide to nest in your chimney or attic. **What can you do?**

## Critter-Proof Your Home

### Plan ahead.

To critter-proof a building, try thinking like a critter - *before* it moves in. The busiest time of year for conflicts between wildlife and people is the spring breeding season when animals search for dens or nest sites to raise their young out of the reach of predators. This begins as early as February for some species. In the fall, some wildlife seek places out of the weather for hibernation or for winter denning.

### Evaluate your home, buildings and outdoor spaces.

Think like a critter as you walk around your house and yard. You'd want to be warm and dry, so look for snug spots out of the rain and wind that an animal can access.



*Great blue heron*

Some species, like squirrels and raccoons, live high up in trees, so your eaves and attic look good to them. Skunks are ground dwellers and burrow under things like porches and woodpiles. Look for small openings like vents, drain

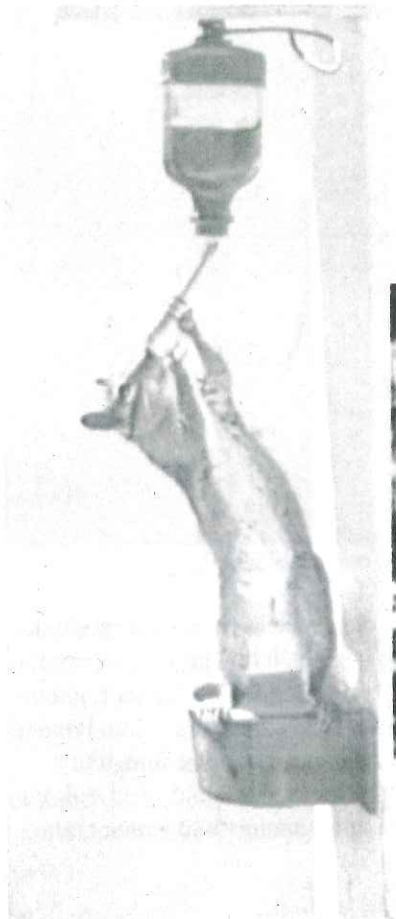


*If you already have an animal inside, see the section titled, "You've Got a Critter in Your House – Now What Do You Do?" on page 10*

pipes, and cracks in the foundation where mice, rats, bats and snakes could enter. Even dryer vents can become nesting places for birds.

**Take steps to prevent problems.**

- Seal potential entryways with sturdy wire mesh, solid materials (plywood, sheet metal, bricks), or caulk openings *before* animals move in. Choose materials that best suit your situation and the type of animal. Species that chew a lot, like squirrels, may quickly chew through a sheet of plywood, but that same plywood would effectively keep out bats.



- Cover window wells by making a framed cover using hardware cloth, chicken wire or heavy wire mesh; or purchase commercially-made grates or bubbles.
- Screen foundation vents and close holes around and under foundations so animals aren't tempted to enter. Bury wire mesh 1–2 feet deep in places where animals might gain access.
- Screen chimneys, wood stove pipes, and furnace, attic and dryer vents. Chimney tops should be screened from February to September to prevent birds and animals from nesting inside. Check first, however, with your local fire department or other safety source to prevent fire and safety hazards. Close dampers when not in use to avoid "drop-in" guests.



*Unintended visitors to food sources.*

**Avoid attracting unwanted wildlife.**

The sound of a tipped over garbage can or finding empty pet food bowls could mean wildlife visitors. It's not healthy for animals to consume food that's not part of their normal diet, to associate areas of human habitation with food, or to lose their fear of people. To prevent this:

- **Please DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE.** Feeding animals artificially increases wildlife populations, making it difficult for them to establish territories for their other needs. Providing artificial food sources may also lead to unnaturally large concentrations of animals and increase the spread of disease. When raccoon numbers are high, for example, diseases like distemper spread more readily in the raccoon population. Some wildlife diseases can be transmitted to

domestic animals, but if pet vaccinations are current, the risk is very low.

- Feed pets indoors. If you must feed dogs or cats outside, bring in food dishes after pets have finished eating to prevent wildlife from eating the leftovers. Bring water bowls in before dark.
- Keep your garbage can in a secure location like a closed garage or outbuilding and bring it out just

*Chipmunks, ground squirrels and woodrats* may be a problem east of the Cascades, and to a lesser extent on the west side. To discourage their presence, keep



*Opossums are not native to Oregon.*

wood piles small and away from houses. Close off all openings around buildings, decks and patios. Pets may also discourage their presence. If needed, clear out brush piles and other cover habitats. Washington ground squirrels, restricted to sage shrub-steppe habitat in Morrow, Gilliam and Umatilla counties, are listed as endangered under the state Endangered Species Act.

*Cougar* (mountain lion) information is available by requesting the brochure, *Living With Wildlife: Mountain Lion*, from your nearest ODFW office.

*Coyotes* are most active from dusk until dawn. This 25-35 pound animal typically preys on rodents, insects, amphibians, fruits, birds and their eggs, and sometimes fawns. They are opportunistic and will also raid garbage cans, outdoor pet food bowls and take livestock and untended small family pets when the opportunity arises. Prevent problems with coyotes by eliminating unnatural food sources around your home and housing pets indoors when not

under your direct supervision, especially at night. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) manages coyotes. For more information, check with your nearest Wildlife Services office, listed in the phone book under USDA.

*Deer and elk* can damage trees, crops and landscaping plants. Effective fencing must be at least 7 feet high to keep out both deer and elk. For specifics on effective fencing materials to fit your site and terrain, contact ODFW for advice.

Many people prefer to use repellents that taste bad or give off a bad odor. They must be applied on a regular basis, especially after it rains. These products are available commercially at farm and garden stores. You can experiment with other techniques like hanging mirrors, strips of aluminum foil, or rags soaked in ammonia. Never attempt to corner or harass a deer

or elk. They can be dangerous and unpredictable.

Also keep in mind that deer will leave their fawns for long periods of time while feeding nearby. **Do not pick up deer fawns.** Call ODFW before you take action.

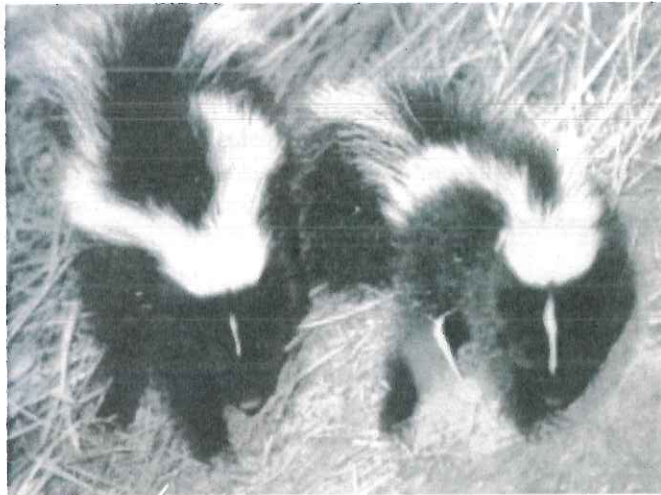
*Opossums* (or "possums") are nonnative and usually active at night. Like raccoons, opossums take advantage of easy living situations and are successful because they adapt to urban environments better than some native species. The same rules of prevention apply – remove opportunities for food and shelter as you would for a raccoon. Opossums negatively impact native invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and ground-nesting birds, eggs and nestlings.

*Raccoons* may nest in sheltered spots like your attic or crawlspace. They are omnivores and opportunistic, meaning they eat a wide variety of foods wherever they are available. These black-masked mammals are intelligent, curious and learn quickly where to get an easy meal or a warm nap.



*Feeding raccoons can artificially increase populations that soon cause problems and spread disease.*

To keep raccoons away, remove the two most important things – food and shelter. Keep pet foods off the porch and keep all garbage cans securely fastened or inaccessible in a garage or shed. Close off all openings and cracks in attics, barns and sheds, and prevent access under porches and decks. Don't forget that raccoons can enter through pet doors.



Striped skunks

**Skunks** are typically nocturnal and people usually smell them before they see them. They like to burrow under porches and sheds and grub around for a meal of insects, small animals, or fruit. It's important to seal openings – even small ones – around foundations and porches. Skunks can dig under a fence, so anchor any barrier at least 1 foot beneath the surface. Remember that skunks are most active after dusk, so seal any openings in the late evening to prevent trapping a skunk under a building. The only thing that smells worse than a live skunk is a dead skunk under your house.

**Tree squirrels** will take up residence in attics or under eaves. Seal openings and screen vents very early in the year or during the winter, because the nesting season for these critters can begin in February and last until autumn. Be

sure no adult squirrels are spending the winter inside before you close the openings.

Although they seldom damage crops or gardens, squirrels can quickly take over any birdfeeder that isn't fitted with a squirrel guard. If squirrels are a problem at your feeder, your local wild bird supply store can show you feeders designed to discourage squirrels.

#### REPTILES

**Snakes** are gardeners' friends. They are great rodent and slug eaters and are quiet guests, living in burrows or under logs. If that still doesn't convince you to let these beneficial reptiles stay, discourage them from taking up residence in your yard by removing debris, elevating or sealing off bases of woodpiles, keeping the lawn trimmed very short, and sealing openings under structures.

If you see a snake and want it to leave, spray it lightly with a garden hose or push it gently with a broom.

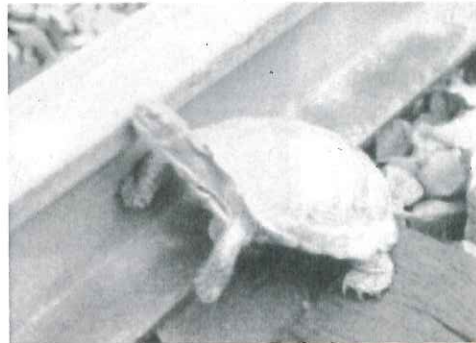
While most native snakes will not harm humans, people who live in rattlesnake country may be concerned about these poisonous snakes. The best control is to construct a snake-proof fence around areas where human activities

occur. Contact an ODFW office for more specifics on fencing out rattlesnakes.

Sealing openings into buildings, modifying habitat to eliminate shelter, and controlling rodents that snakes might feed on can also reduce their presence. Problem "rattlers" can be trapped and relocated to areas away from homes or killed. Again, snakes are beneficial, so the action taken should reflect the seriousness of the situation to the property owner.

#### AMPHIBIANS

**Frogs** - The most likely native frog to visit your pond is the Pacific treefrog. They are found throughout Oregon in a variety of habitats, often far from water. Treefrogs frequently "discover" backyard water features during their wanderings and are voracious insect eaters. They are green to



Left: Pacific treefrog  
Right: Turtles encounter many hazards in urban areas (painted turtle).

## Removing Problem Wildlife

Permits from ODFW are required to capture and relocate native wildlife. Live-trapping should be done as a last resort. Relocation sites must be chosen carefully, because many animals do not survive relocation. Relocated animals may also spread disease and disrupt wildlife populations in the areas where they are relocated. ODFW does not advocate live-trapping wildlife when young are in the nest. Nonnative wildlife may not be relocated and should be euthanized. Call ODFW for advice.

Some ODFW offices have live-traps for loan. Others can refer you to vendors who rent live-traps or companies authorized to capture and relocate problem wildlife – or look in the telephone directory under Animal Control. Contact Wildlife Services, listed under USDA, for assistance with coyotes or cougar preying on livestock.

## Injured or Orphaned Wildlife

If you find injured, sick or possibly orphaned wildlife, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitation center or ODFW for advice *before* taking action. Proper care and handling will increase the animal's chance for recovery; your safety in handling injured wildlife is also important.

Most baby animals are not really abandoned or orphaned. Either the wildlife parent left to forage for food and will return or is out of site nearby, waiting for you to leave. Do not pick up fawns, seal pups, baby birds and other wildlife babies unless you are certain it is injured or you witnessed the death or injury of the parent. If needed, keep an eye on the situation to keep pets and people from bothering the animal. If a young bird on the ground is in harm's way, place it back in the nest or in a nearby shrub; or use a small basket and hang it in a tree by the handle. Otherwise, **the best policy is to leave wildlife young alone.**



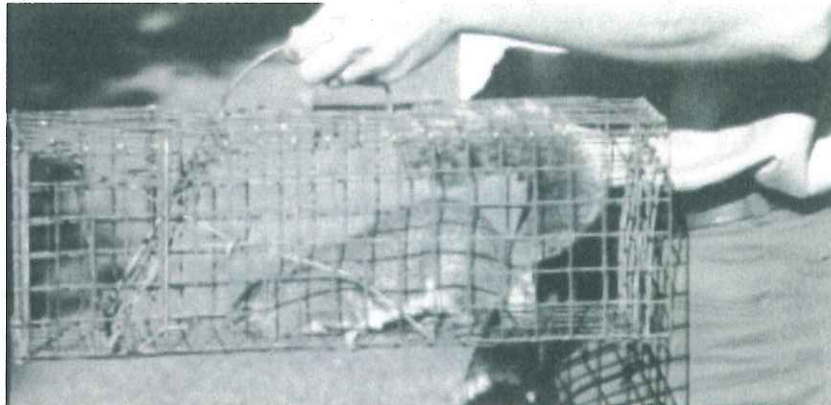
*Blacktail deer fawn*

## Wildlife and the Law

**It's important to know what Oregon law says about handling wild animals.**

- Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators may care for injured wildlife.
- Permits are required from ODFW to live-trap and release **protected** wildlife. Permits are issued with live-traps. If you are unsure whether a species is protected, call for advice.
- All birds – except starlings, house sparrows and rock doves (feral pigeons) – are protected by law.
- It is illegal to release domestic and nonnative animals into the wild. Many nonnative species are illegal to sell, purchase or own.
- In general, protected species may not be captured from the wild under any circumstances. Permits are issued for only a few protected species. Call ODFW for more information.
- Poison may not be used to remove most native wildlife. Poison may be used for mice, rats, moles and gophers. Remember that these species may be eaten by other domestic and wild animals which could harm them.

*A permit from ODFW is required to live-trap and release protected wildlife.*







# Living with Wildlife

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

## What You Can Do to Help Wildlife

- Keep the "wild" in wildlife. Observe wildlife from a distance and don't feed them or encourage them to approach you. Do not expect them to behave like domestic pets; they can become aggressive when approached or if they feel threatened.
- Help prevent injuries to wildlife by picking up litter, especially six-pack holders that may get caught around a neck or wing. Pack out fishing debris such as fishing line, lures and hooks that could get caught in a bill or foot.
- Help wildlife by providing for their basic needs – food, water and space. Turn part of your yard into wildlife habitat. Include water features and plant native vegetation to provide natural food and shelter.
- Pick up some field guides and books on wildlife to learn more about animals in nearby natural areas or those visiting your yard.
- Support funding for nongame and urban wildlife programs.
- Donate to wildlife rehabilitation centers.



Wildlife friendly backyard.

### WHO TO CALL FOR ASSISTANCE

**NATIVE WILDLIFE:** For information and referrals on problems, contact your local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office. For emergencies or after business hours, contact your local police department or Oregon State Police.

**INJURED NATIVE WILDLIFE:** Contact Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife or a local wildlife rehabilitation center.

**DOMESTIC OR NONNATIVE ANIMALS:** Contact your city or county animal control program.

**ROAD-KILLED DEER:** Contact the city, county or state highway department with jurisdiction for the road.

**WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS:** Call the Oregon State Police.

**COYOTES:** Look for Wildlife Services in your phone book under U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

### DEPARTMENT OFFICES

REGION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Northwest	17330 SE Evelyn Street, Clackamas, OR 97015	503-657-2000
Southwest	4192 N Umpqua Hwy, Roseburg, OR 97470	541-440-3353
High Desert	61374 Parrell Road, Bend, OR 97702	541-388-6363
Northeast	107 20th Street, La Grande, OR 97850	541-963-2138
Salem HQ	3406 NE Cherry Avenue, Salem, OR 97303	503-947-6000

This publication is also available on our website at: [www.dfw.state.or.us](http://www.dfw.state.or.us)

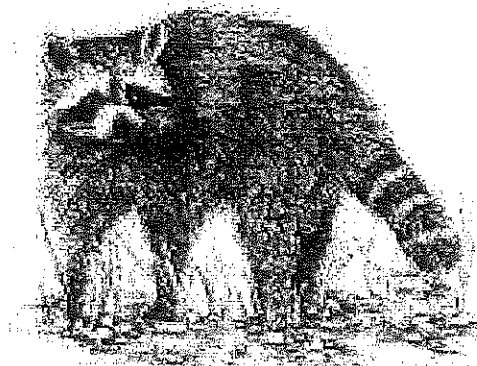
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This material will be furnished in alternate format for people with disabilities if needed. Please call 503-872-5264 (voice) or 503-872-5259 (Portland TTY) to request.

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**Wildlife Control Operator  
Training Manual**



# Acknowledgements

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## Methods of Control

When faced with wildlife damage or nuisance situations, the WCO and the landowner must carefully evaluate the situation and decide upon one of the following courses of action:

1. **Realize concerns are unfounded:** Some calls come from people who regard certain animals as nuisances even though the "offending" animal has not caused any damage to property, poses no real threat of damage, and therefore cannot be controlled under the terms of a permit. The most common reason for these types of calls are an unjustified concern over potential damage to property, crops, livestock, or a perceived threat to the safety of humans or pets. In many situations, education and reassurance will alleviate concerns. The natural predatory and competitive interactions of wild animals are not generally a legitimate reason for control. Observing a coyote or raccoon walking through the neighborhood or a person's backyard may be a cause for concern but does not warrant any action to be taken by the property owner.
2. **Manage the habitat:** The activities of people often create habitat for animals that eventually becomes a problem. Piles of brush, wood, rocks, dense tall grass and shrubs areas provide cover for many species of wildlife. Better management of these areas often reduces their attractiveness to wildlife species causing the problem. Plugging or covering holes into buildings and under porches are only a few of the "**exclusionary**" efforts that can be initially implemented to solve a problem. Properly covering holes and entrances through which animals/birds can enter a structure is often the most effective, long-term solution to nuisance animal problems. Always verify that there are no animals present before sealing structures and if animals happen to be present, evict and/or trap prior to sealing all the access points.
3. **Eliminate the attraction:** When left outdoors, refuse, garbage, or pet foods provide a strong attraction for a number of wildlife species including raccoons, opossum, skunks, and certain species of birds. Such "dinner plates" can eventually entice animals into creating real damage to property if the lure of a free handout is not properly managed. Landowners are encouraged to eliminate such an "**attractive nuisance.**" In this situation, control measures such as live trapping are unwarranted until every effort is made to educate the landowner and proper trash handling is implemented to permanently eliminate the attraction.
4. **Alter the situation so that the potential for damage is reduced:** In many cases this option will provide the best long-term solution to a nuisance animal problem. Poor building design and/or poor maintenance, which provide easy and inviting access to wildlife, can be corrected. **Exclusion**, such as fencing, screening and repairs to existing vents, woodwork, chimneys (screens and caps should meet building code standards) or foundations are very effective at keeping wild animals away from areas where they are not wanted.

Harassment measures such as a radio and/or lights in the crawl space or attic may prove effective for transient problems.

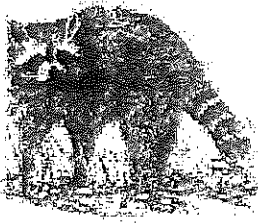
5. **Remove the offending animal:** For most species that can be handled with a WCO permit, box or cage-type live traps are the devices recommended for capture, particularly in urban and suburban areas. Traps must be tagged (legibly marked or branded) with either the owner's business name and phone number or the owner's furtaker license or WCO (brand) number assigned by ODFW. The use of firearms to euthanize an animal or bird is not permitted within most city limits. Always use good judgment when using any type of trap to avoid catching neighborhood pets and other non-target animals. It is highly recommended that when an animal is euthanized, it is done away from the capture site in a humane and discreet manner.

In many cases humane euthanasia is the preferred method of disposal for damage and nuisance wildlife.

### Relocating Animals

The following rules should be followed and recommendations considered and explained to the landowner before relocating captured wildlife:

- A. Predatory animals, furbearers except raccoons, and non-game, non-protected wildlife may be released on site, humanely euthanized or as authorized by the Department, relocated into suitable habitat (OAR 635-435-0035).
- B. Prohibited species cannot be relocated off site except to humanely euthanize them. Prohibited species cannot be relocated to other sites (OAR 635-435-0035).
- C. A permittee must release raccoons on site or humanely euthanize them. Raccoons must not be relocated offsite except to humanely euthanize them. Raccoons cannot be relocated to other sites except as authorized by the Department (OAR 635-435-0035) because:
  1. Wildlife will be stressed from capture, handling, and transport.
  2. Wildlife can carry a variety of diseases and parasites that can spread to areas that were previously free of disease or parasite.
  3. Relocation of wildlife to an environment that is already at carrying capacity causes increased competition with the resident population for food, water and shelter.
  4. Relocation can disrupt the social structure, which can lead to increasing fighting, death, or injury to resident or relocated animals.
  5. Relocated wildlife often will try to return home.
  6. Relocated wildlife may cause problems for humans in the vicinity of the release site.
  7. Relocation alone does not solve the problem. Unless appropriate steps are taken to modify the environment, another animal will move into the area that is now vacant.



**Common Name** – Raccoon

**Scientific Name** – *Procyon lotor*

**Description:** The raccoon is a stocky, medium-sized furbearer. The fur on the back is usually a grizzled black, washed with gray or yellow. The belly fur is lighter in color. All raccoons have distinctively darker hair around their eyes that forms what looks like a mask. Their tail is distinctive because it has alternating bands of light and dark fur. Raccoons have a broad head with a pointed muzzle. The feet are naked and possess five prominent toes. Adults have a total length in the range of 24 to 41 inches. They typically weigh from 8 to 20 pounds.

**Protection Status:** Furbearer. Must be release on site or humanely euthanized unless authorized by the local Department District Biologist.

**Habitat:** Raccoons appear throughout Oregon. They can be found just about anywhere that food, shelter and water are available. Raccoons den in a wide variety of locations, including hollow trees, junk piles, abandoned buildings, culverts, under houses and attic spaces.

**Habits:** Raccoons are generally nocturnal, but they may be seen out in the daytime, especially early in the spring and fall. Raccoons will try to gain as much weight as possible in the fall, storing up a fat reserve for the cold days of winter. For this reason, raccoons have a voracious appetite in the fall. Shifts in the raccoon's diet occur rapidly in the fall as different foods become available. Raccoons will often den up during extremely cold or severe weather and take a short winter sleep, but they do not hibernate.

**Reproduction:** Generally, 60 percent of the females breed when one year old, while 90 percent of the females over one year old will breed. The number of yearling females that breed may fluctuate greatly depending on population density. Males may breed when one year old, but rarely do so because older, more aggressive males out-compete them for mates. Males are sexually active from late December through May or June. Most breeding activity takes place in February. Gestations are typically 63 days and females have one litter per year. There are usually 3-4 young per litter. Most young are born in late March through early May. The young are weaned when 8-10 weeks old and may be seen out of the den at this time. Males do not help raise the young. The young may stay with the females as a loosely knit family until the following breeding season.

**Diet:** The raccoon is a true omnivore. Some of the wide variety of foods consumed by the raccoon include: birds, eggs of all kinds, crayfish, insects, fish, frogs, mice, rats, fruits, berries, corn, nuts and pet food.

**Sign:** Raccoon tracks are quite distinctive. Tracks may be found anywhere, but they are most easily seen and studied along muddy shorelines. Raccoon scats are also distinctive and may be found near denning areas.

**Predators:** Humans, cougars, bobcats, foxes, great-horned owls, coyotes and dogs.

**Diseases:** Canine and feline distemper, leptospirosis, parvovirus, pseudorabies, tuberculosis and rabies are all known to occur in raccoons.

**Parasites:** Ticks, lice, fleas, botfly, roundworms (*Baylisascaris*), flukes and tapeworms.

#### **Prevention and Control:**

A radio set to a talk station and/ or strobe light placed in an attic or crawl space in which a raccoon is denning is often sufficient to cause a raccoon to move from the area and take their young.

#### **Exclusion:**

- Single-wired electric fence located 8 inches above the ground.
- Confine birds in an enclosed and covered area.
- Hardware cloth around decks and bury at least 6 inches down and 6 inches out from the building.
- Replace and reinforce damaged screen vents.
- Install metal guards (flashing) that are at least 18 inches wider, wrapped around trees at about five to six feet above the ground.
- Keep crawl spaces tightly covered.
- Secure pet doors at night or use electronic pet doors.
- Secure caps on chimneys.
- Raccoon eviction paste
- One-way doors

#### **Habitat Modification:**

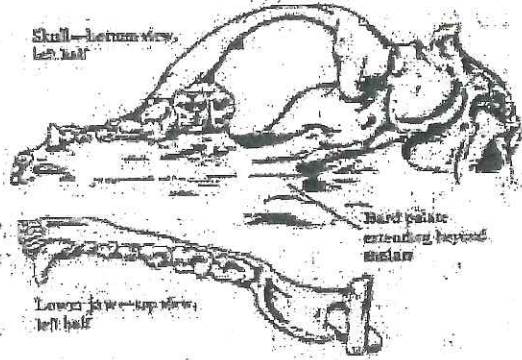
- Remove pet food and water dishes during the evening through morning time period.
- Secure garbage can lids.
- Prune trees at least 3 feet above roof lines.
- Securely cover compost bins.
- Remove brush piles.

**Trapping:** Live or cage-type trap, foot-hold traps, specialty traps.

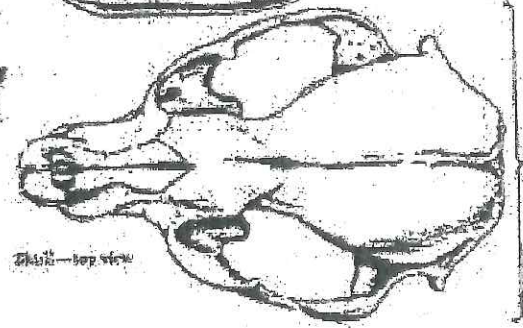
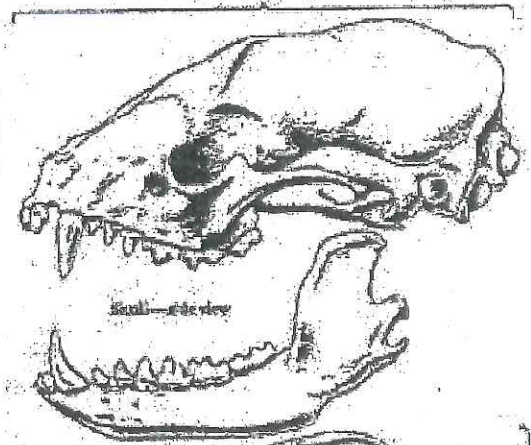
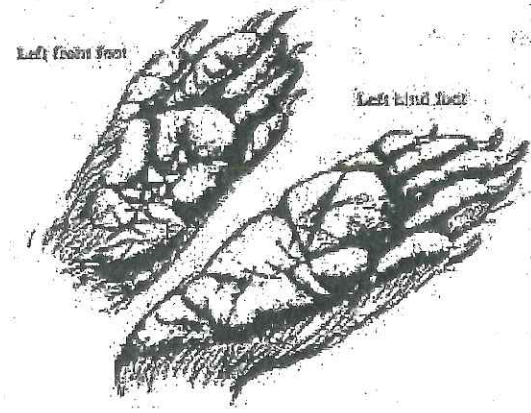
**Baits and lures:** Many baits and lures attract raccoons; apples, corn, fish, peanut butter and marshmallows are common baits. Honey, anise, apple juice and fish oils are common lures.



Pl. K. Fischer 309-327 mm



Hard palate extending beyond nostrils



Pl. K. Fischer 166-173 mm



## Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## Factsheet

May 2010

## Living With Wildlife



Wildlife Services (WS), a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), provides Federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife damage that threatens the Nation's agricultural and natural resources, human health and safety, and property.

Equipped with the right information and tools, most homeowners can solve their problems and learn to live with wildlife.

Wild animals contribute to our enjoyment of nature and outdoor recreation, but they can also damage property, agriculture, and natural resources and threaten human health and safety. The WS program assists in solving problems created by wildlife.

Equipped with the right information and tools, most homeowners can solve their problems and learn to live with wildlife. For example, trimming trees and shrubbery can change a habitat and make it less attractive to unwanted bird flocks or even snakes. Limiting food sources can deter predators or unwanted wildlife.

Homeowners can take specific steps to help keep curious raccoons out of the garbage, a persistent rabbit or deer out of the garden, waterfowl out of the backyard pool, a woodpecker off the siding, or a swooping bat out of the attic. Caution should always be taken to avoid overly aggressive animals.

### Tips for Keeping Wildlife at Bay

Most wildlife species are protected by Federal or State laws and regulations. For information about threatened and endangered species and trapping and relocation regulations, contact your State wildlife agency or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### Squirrels and Other Rodents

To keep these animals from becoming a permanent part of the family home and yard, homeowners can screen louvers, vents, and fan openings; keep doors and windows in good repair; tighten eaves; replace rotten boards; cap chimneys; trim overhanging trees; remove bird feeders or use squirrel-proof feeders; and remove acorns and other nuts from the yard. Chipmunks can be deterred by removing denning habitat, which includes logs, rock walls, and stones.

*Scare devices, repellants, and wire-mesh fencing may discourage deer from feeding on row crops, vegetables, and nursery stock.*



## Woodchucks

These animals, also known as groundhogs, sometimes burrow near buildings, browse in gardens, and damage fruit trees and ornamental shrubs. Fencing can help reduce woodchuck damage. The lower edge should be buried at least 10 inches in the ground to prevent burrowing. The fence should be 3 to 4 feet high, with a surrounding electric hot-shot wire placed 4 to 5 inches off the ground.



## Opossums and Skunks

Opossums and skunks become a homeowner's problem by raiding garbage cans and bird feeders; eating pet foods; and living under porches, or other areas that provide shelter. Skunks also dig in lawns, golf courses, and gardens. Both animals sometimes kill poultry and eat eggs. To keep opossums and skunks from denning under buildings, seal off all foundation openings with wire mesh, sheet metal, or concrete. Protect chicken coops by sealing all ground-level openings into the buildings and by closing the doors at night. Use tight-fitting lids and straps to eliminate foraging in garbage cans.

## Bats

Bats prefer to avoid human contact; however, they are known to roost in attics and abandoned buildings. This can be eliminated by sealing entry and exit holes (after the bats leave) with such materials as 1/4-inch hardware cloth, caulking, or wire mesh. If a bat makes its way into

the house, it can usually be encouraged to leave after dark by turning on lights and opening windows and doors.

## Waterfowl

Although most people find a few birds acceptable, problems quickly develop as bird numbers increase. Damage includes overgrazing of grass and plants; accumulation of droppings and feathers; attacks on humans by aggressive birds; and the fouling of water, lawns, and recreational areas. Flocks of geese and other

waterfowl also feed on various crops. Feeding of waterfowl may contribute to conflicts with humans. WS' factsheet on waterfowl contains information on numerous techniques to address these conflicts.

## Rabbits

Rabbits can be kept away from gardens, ornamental plants, and small trees by using products containing repellents or by placing a

2-foot poultry fence around the area. The fence must be buried at least 6 inches beneath the ground surface. For information about taste repellents, check local garden or farm centers. Before using any chemical repellents, read the label carefully and check with your State pesticide regulatory agency for application guidelines.

## Raccoons

Easy food sources attract raccoons: garden produce, garbage, and pet food. To help prevent scavenging, use metal trash cans fastened to a pole or other solid object. A strap or latch should secure the lid. To keep raccoons out of the garden, use two strands of electric livestock fence placed 4 and 8 inches, respectively, off the ground, surrounding the entire garden. Exercise caution when implementing this exclusionary method in urban areas. Raccoons will also readily inhabit attics, chimneys, and sheds. Use metal flashing and 1-inch mesh hardware cloth to block entrances.

*Simple steps can keep opossums from raiding garbage cans or denning under buildings.*

**To keep snakes out of a house, seal cracks and openings around doors, windows, water pipes, attics, and foundations.**

## Snakes

The best way to keep snakes out of a house is to seal cracks and openings around doors, windows, water pipes, attics, and foundations. A yard can be made less attractive by removing logs, woodpiles, and high grass and controlling insects and rodents. Remove nonpoisonous snakes from inside buildings by placing piles of damp burlap bags in areas where snakes have been seen. After the snakes have curled up beneath the bags, remove the bags and snakes from the building. Call a professional pest control company to remove dangerous snakes.

## Woodpeckers

These birds damage buildings by drilling holes into wooden siding, eaves, or trim boards, especially those made of cedar or redwood. If the pecking creates a suitable cavity, the bird may use it for nesting. Effective methods for excluding woodpeckers include placing lightweight mesh nylon or plastic netting on the wooden siding beneath the eaves, covering pecked areas with metal sheathing, and using visual repellents like "eye-spot" balloons and Mylar strips.

## Deer

Deer feed on row crops, vegetables, fruit trees, nursery stock, stacked hay, ornamental plants, and trees. Deer can be discouraged by removing supplemental food sources and by using scare devices and repellents. The only sure way to eliminate deer damage is to fence the deer out. A wire-mesh fence is effective if it is solidly constructed and at least 8 feet high. Electric fencing also helps reduce damage.

## Coyotes and Foxes

These animals may carry rabies and sometimes prey on domestic pets, rabbits, poultry, young pigs, and lambs. Coyotes also kill calves, goats, and deer. Net-wire and electric fencing will help exclude foxes and coyotes.

However, because they are good climbers, a roof of net-wire on livestock pens may also be necessary. For more information about fencing, contact your local county extension office.

The protection of livestock and poultry is vital during the spring denning period. Foxes and coyotes will often den close to farm buildings, under haystacks, or inside hog lots or small lambing pastures. Shed lambing and farrowing in protected enclosures can be useful in preventing predation on young livestock. Additionally, noise- and light-making devices and

*Foxes often  
den close to  
farm buildings  
or animal  
enclosures.*



guarding dogs may also aid in preventing predation on sheep. Regrettably, dispersal methods are not effective in all situations, so other methods, including trapping or snaring, may have to be used.

## Mountain Lions and Bears

As bear and lion populations increase and their habitats continue to decrease, interactions between these animals and humans become more frequent. Bears are noted for destroying cornfields and trees, scavenging in garbage cans, demolishing cabin and camper interiors, and killing livestock. Lions are serious predators of sheep, goats, domestic pets, large livestock, poultry, bighorn sheep, and deer. Typical bear and lion predation on sheep may leave 10 or more killed in a single attack, and both species are known to attack humans.

**To prevent problems, modify habitat and avoid intentional or accidental feeding.**

Prevention is the best method of controlling bear and lion damage. Heavy woven and electric fencing can effectively deter bears and lions from attacking livestock and damaging property. Loud music, barking dogs, exploder cannons, fireworks, gunfire, nightlights, scarecrows, and changes in the position of objects in the depredation area often provide temporary relief. The best way to protect pets is to keep them inside an enclosed shelter. Using guarding dogs, removing garbage and dead carcasses, and placing crops and beehives at considerable distances away from timber and brush may reduce damage by bears. Mountain lions also prefer to hunt where escape cover is close by; removal of brush and trees within a quarter of a mile of buildings and livestock may reduce lion predation. Professional relocation of damaging mountain lions and bears is sometimes necessary.

For more information about State laws and regulations concerning relocation or lethal control of mountain lions and bears, contact your State wildlife agency.

### **Additional Information**

For more information about solving these and other wildlife problems, please telephone the WS office in your State at 1-866-4USDA-WS, or contact the WS Operational Support Staff at (301) 851-4009. Additionally, you can contact WS by mail at: USDA, APHIS, WS, 4700 River Road, Unit 87, Riverdale, MD 20737.

You can also find information on WS programs by visiting our Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/).



Protecting People | Protecting Agriculture | Protecting Wildlife



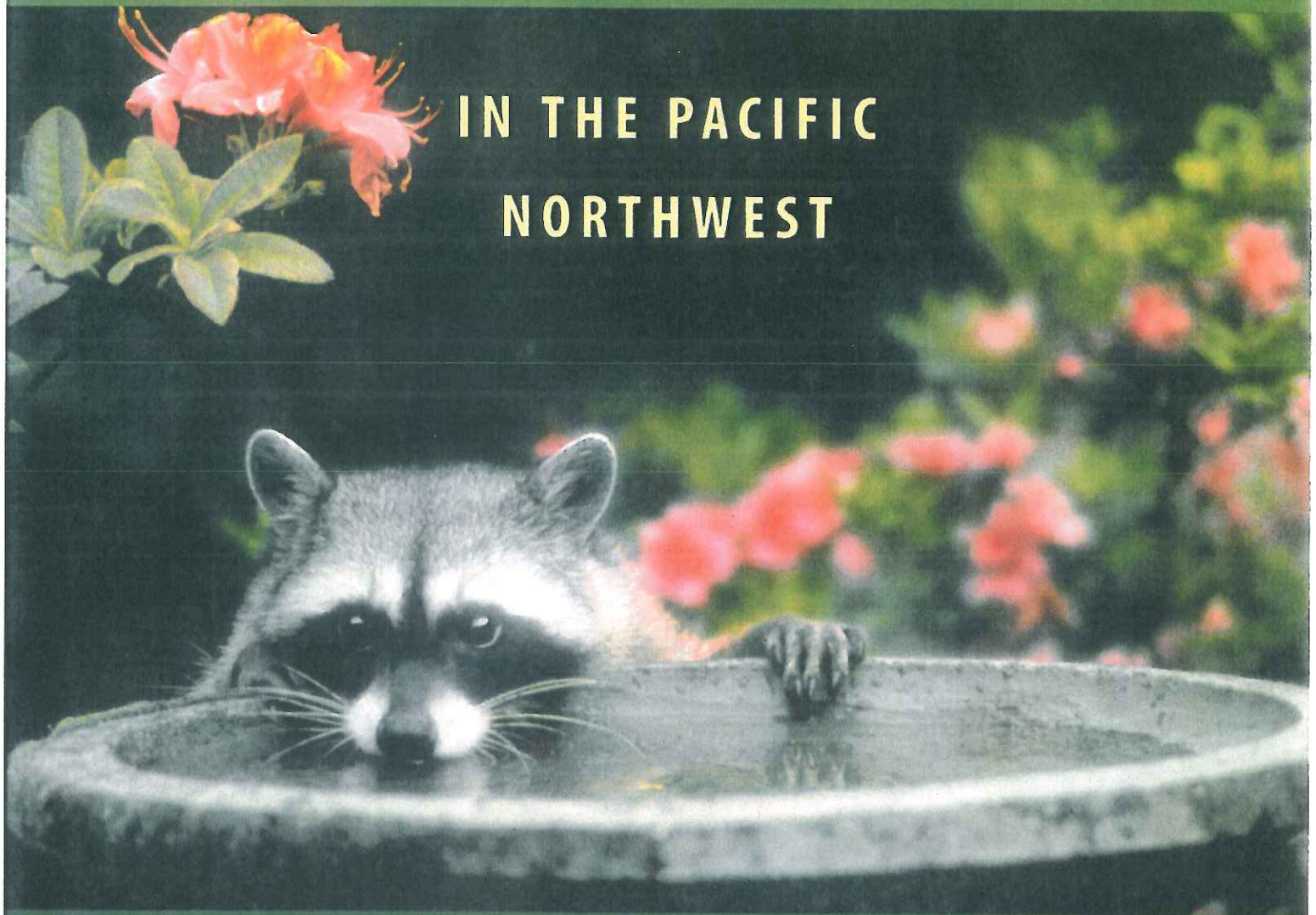
**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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# Living with Wildlife

IN THE PACIFIC  
NORTHWEST



Russell Link

## Tips for Attracting Raccoons

Raccoons can be attracted to your property by providing natural food sources and living spaces.

Suggestions include:

- Keep as much wooded property in a natural condition as you can. Den trees, and potential den trees, should be given special protection.
- Where natural dens are scarce, den boxes can be installed on trees in wooded areas near water.
- Plant and protect native trees and shrubs that provide nuts, acorns, and fruits at different times of the year. These will be eaten while on the plants and after they have fallen.
- Protect creeks, streams, and marshes on and near your property from destruction and pollution.
- Build any size pond and stock it with fish.
- Keep domestic dogs indoors or fenced.

## Trails

Raccoons use trails made by other wildlife or humans next to creeks, ravines, ponds, and other water sources. Raccoons often use culverts as a safe way to cross under roads. With a marsh on one side of the road and woods on the other, a culvert becomes their chief route back and forth. Look for raccoon tracks in sand, mud, or soft soil at either end of the culvert (Fig. 3).

In developed areas, raccoon travel along fences, next to buildings, and near food sources.

## Tracks, Scratch Marks, and Similar Signs

Look for tracks in sand, mud, or soft soil, also on deck railings, fire escapes, and other surfaces that raccoons use to gain access to structures. Tracks may appear as smudge marks on the side of a house where a raccoon shimmies up and down a downspout or utility pipe.

Sharp, nonretractable claws and long digits make raccoons good climbers. Like squirrels, raccoons can rotate their hind feet 180 degrees and descend trees headfirst. (Cats' claws don't rotate and they have to back down trees.) Look for scratch marks on trees and other structures that raccoons climb.

Look for wear marks, body oil, and hairs on wood and other rough surfaces, particularly around the edges of den entrances. The den's entrance hole is usually at least 4 inches high and 6 inches wide (10 x 15 cm).

## Droppings

Raccoon droppings are crumbly, flat-ended, and can contain a variety of food items. The length



Figure 3. The rear foot of a raccoon shows the "heel" and looks like a small human footprint. Both front and back feet have five toes. The front prints have shorter heel marks and are 2 to 3 inches (5–7.5 cm) long; the hind tracks are 3 to 4 inches (7.5–10 cm) long. (From Pandell and Stall, *Animal Tracks of the Pacific Northwest*.)

is 3 to 5 inches (7.5–13 cm), but this is usually broken into segments. The diameter is about the size of the end of your little finger.

Raccoons leave droppings on logs, at the base of trees, and on roofs (raccoons defecate before climbing trees and entering structures). Raccoons create toilet areas—inside and outside structures—away from the nesting area. House cats have similar habits.

**Note:** Raccoon droppings may carry a parasite that can be fatal to humans. Do not handle or smell raccoon droppings and wash your hands if you touch any. (See "Public Health Concerns.")

## Calls

Raccoons make several types of noises, including a purr, a chittering sound, and various growls, snarls, and snorts.

## Preventing Conflicts

A raccoon's search for food may lead it to a vegetable garden, fish pond, garbage can, or chicken coop. Its search for a den site may lead it to an attic, chimney, or crawl space. The most effective way to prevent conflicts is to modify the habitat around your

home so as not to attract raccoons. Recommendations on how to do this are given below.

**Don't feed raccoons.** Feeding raccoons may create undesirable situations for you, your children, neighbors, pets, and the raccoons themselves. Raccoons that are fed by people often lose their fear of humans and may become aggressive when not fed as expected. Artificial feeding also tends to concentrate raccoons in a small area; overcrowding can spread diseases and parasites. Finally, these hungry visitors might approach a neighbor who doesn't share your appreciation of the animals. The neighbor might choose to remove these raccoons, or have them removed.

**Don't give raccoons access to garbage.** Keep your garbage-can lid on tight by securing it with rope, chain, bungee cords, or weights. Better yet, buy garbage cans with clamps or other mechanisms that hold lids on. To prevent tipping, secure side handles to metal or wooden stakes driven into the ground. Or keep your cans in tight-fitting bins, a shed, or a garage. Put garbage cans out for pickup in the morning, after raccoons have returned to their resting areas.

**Feed dogs and cats indoors and keep them in at night.** If you must feed your pets outside, do so in late morning or at midday, and pick up food, water bowls, leftovers, and spilled food well before dark every day.

Keep pets indoors at night. If cornered, raccoons may attack dogs and cats. Bite wounds from raccoons can result in fractures and disease transmission.

**Prevent raccoons from entering pet doors.** Keep indoor pet food and any other food away from a pet door. Lock the pet door at night. If it is necessary to have it remain open, put an electronically activated opener on your pet's collar. *Note:* Floodlights or motion-detector lights placed above the pet door to scare raccoons are not long-term solutions.

**Put food in secure compost containers and clean up barbecue areas.** Don't put food of any kind in open compost piles; instead, use a securely covered compost structure or a commercially available raccoon-proof composter to prevent attracting raccoons and getting exposed to their droppings. A covered worm box is another alternative. If burying food scraps, cover them with at least 8 inches (20 cm) of soil and don't leave any garbage above ground in the area—including the stinky shovel.

Clean barbecue grills and grease traps thoroughly following each use.

**Eliminate access to denning sites.** Raccoons commonly use chimneys, attics, and spaces under houses, porches, and sheds as den sites. Close any potential entries with ¼-inch (12 mm) mesh hardware cloth, boards, or metal flashing. Make all connections flush and secure to keep mice, rats, and other mammals out. Make sure you don't trap an animal inside when you seal off a potential entry (see Appendix B, "Evicting Animals from Buildings"). For information on securing chimneys, see "Raccoons in Dumpsters and Down Chimneys."

Prevent raccoons from accessing rooftops by trimming tree limbs away from structures and

## Raccoons Too Close for Comfort

If a raccoon ever approaches too closely, make yourself appear larger: stand up if sitting, shout, and wave your arms. If necessary, throw stones or send the raccoon off with a dousing of water from a hose or bucket.

If a raccoon continues to act aggressively or strangely (circling, staggering as if drunk or disoriented, or shows unnatural tameness) it may be sick or injured. In such a case, call a wildlife rehabilitator (see Chapter 20, "Wildlife Rehabilitators and Wildlife Rehabilitation"), your local wildlife office (see Appendix E for contact information), or the state patrol.

If aggressive raccoons are routinely seen in your area, prepare your children for a possible encounter. Explain the reasons why raccoons live there (habitat, food sources, species adaptability) and what they should do if one approaches them. By shouting a set phrase such as "Go away raccoon!" when they encounter one, instead of a general scream, children will inform nearby adults of the raccoon's presence. Demonstrate and rehearse encounter behavior with the children.

If a raccoon finds its way into your house, stay calm, close surrounding interior doors, leave the room, and let the animal find its way back out through the open door, window, or pet door. If necessary, gently use a broom to corral the raccoon outside. (Do not corner a raccoon, thereby forcing it to defend itself.)

# Living with Wildlife

## Raccoons

The raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is a native mammal, measuring about 3 feet long, including its 12-inch, bushy, ringed tail. Because their hind legs are longer than the front legs, raccoons have a hunched appearance when they walk or run. Each of their front feet has five dexterous toes, allowing raccoons to grasp and manipulate food and other items (Fig. 1).

Raccoons prefer forest areas near a stream or water source, but have adapted to various environments throughout Washington. Raccoon populations can get quite large in urban areas, owing to hunting and trapping restrictions, few predators, and human-supplied food.

Adult raccoons weigh 15 to 40 pounds, their weight being a result of genetics, age, available food, and habitat location. Males have weighed in at over 60 pounds. A raccoon in the wild will probably weigh less than the urbanized raccoon that has learned to live on handouts, pet food, and garbage-can leftovers.

As long as raccoons are kept out of human homes, not cornered, and not treated as pets, they are not dangerous.

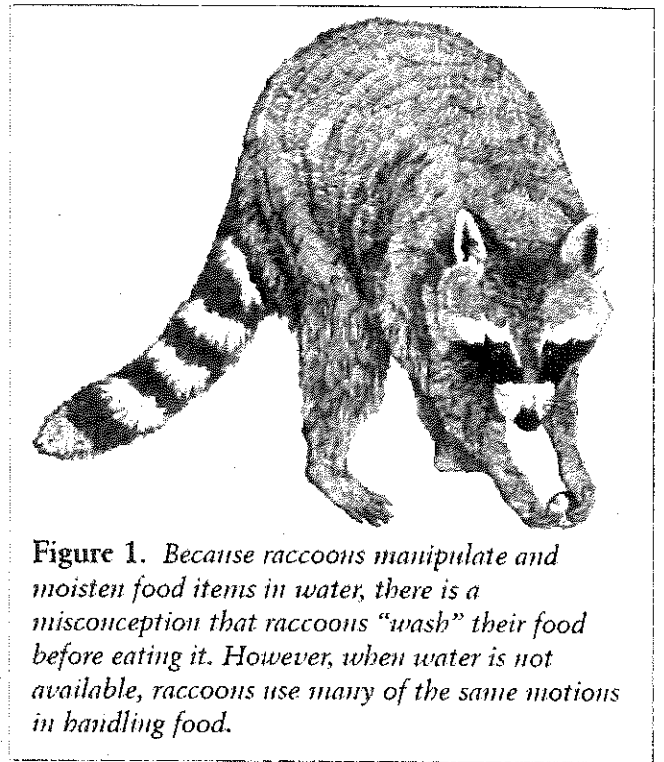
### Facts about Raccoons

#### Food and Feeding Habits

- Raccoons will eat almost anything, but are particularly fond of creatures found in water—clams, crayfish, frogs, fish, and snails.
- Raccoons also eat insects, slugs, dead animals, birds and bird eggs, as well as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. Around humans, raccoons often eat garbage and pet food.
- Although not great hunters, raccoons can catch young gophers, squirrels, mice, and rats.
- Except during the breeding season and for females with young, raccoons are solitary. Individuals will eat together if a large amount of food is available in an area.

#### Den Sites and Resting Sites

- Dens are used for shelter and raising young. They include abandoned burrows dug by other mammals, areas in or under large rock piles and brush piles, hollow logs, and holes in trees.
- Den sites also include wood duck nest-boxes, attics, crawl spaces, chimneys, and abandoned vehicles.
- In urban areas, raccoons normally use den sites as daytime rest sites. In wooded areas, they often rest in trees.
- Raccoons generally move to different den or daytime rest site every few days and do not follow a predictable pattern. Only a female with young or an animal “holed up” during a cold spell will use the same den for any length of time. Several raccoons may den together during winter storms.



**Figure 1.** *Because raccoons manipulate and moisten food items in water, there is a misconception that raccoons “wash” their food before eating it. However, when water is not available, raccoons use many of the same motions in handling food.*



## Reproduction and Home Range

- Raccoons pair up only during the breeding season, and mating occurs as early as January to as late as June. The peak mating period is March to April.
- After a 65-day gestation period, two to three kits are born.
- The kits remain in the den until they are about seven weeks old, at which time they can walk, run, climb, and begin to occupy alternate dens.
- At eight to ten weeks of age, the young regularly accompany their mother outside the den and forage for themselves. By 12 weeks, the kits roam on their own for several nights before returning to their mother.
- The kits remain with their mother in her home range through winter, and in early spring seek out their own territories.
- The size of a raccoon's home range as well as its nightly hunting area varies greatly depending on the habitat and food supply. Home range diameters of 1 mile are known to occur in urban areas.

## Mortality and Longevity

- Raccoons die from encounters with vehicles, hunters, and trappers, and from disease, starvation, and predation.
- Young raccoons are the main victims of starvation, since they have very little fat reserves to draw from during food shortages in late winter and early spring.
- Raccoon predators include cougars, bobcats, coyotes, and domestic dogs. Large owls and eagles will prey on young raccoons.
- The average life span of a raccoon in the wild is 2 to 3 years; captive raccoons have lived 13.

## Viewing Raccoons

Raccoons can be seen throughout the year, except during extremely cold periods. Usually observed at night, they are occasionally seen during the day eating or napping in a tree or searching elsewhere for food. Coastal raccoons take advantage of low tides and are seen foraging on shellfish and other food by day.

## Trails

Raccoons use trails made by other wildlife or humans next to creeks, ravines, ponds, and other water sources. Raccoons often use culverts as a safe way to cross under roads. With a marsh on one side of the road and woods on the other, a culvert becomes their chief route back and forth. Look for raccoon tracks in sand, mud, or soft soil at either end of the culvert.

In developed areas, raccoon travel along fences, next to buildings, and near food sources.

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Look for tracks in sand, mud, or soft soil, also on deck railings, fire escapes, and other surfaces that raccoons use to gain access to structures (Fig. 2). Tracks may appear as smudge marks on the side of a house where a raccoon shimmies up and down a downspout or utility pipe.

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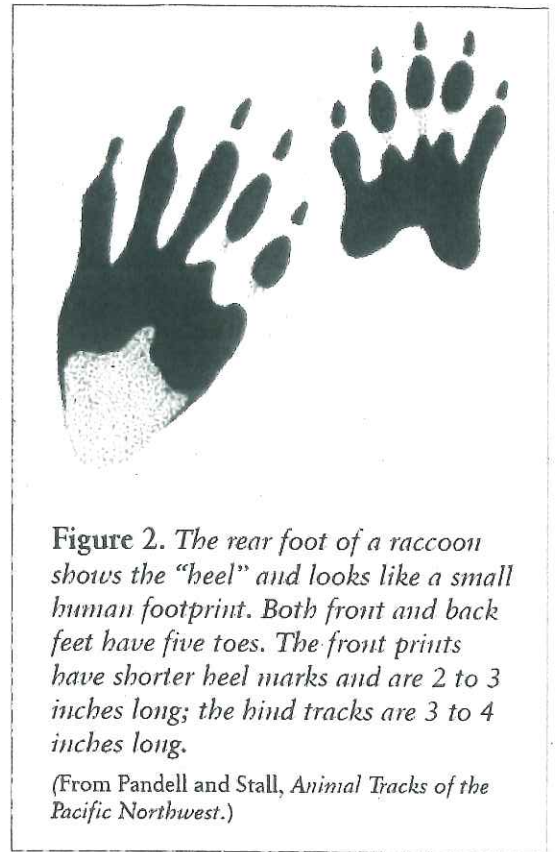
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**Figure 2.** *The rear foot of a raccoon shows the “heel” and looks like a small human footprint. Both front and back feet have five toes. The front prints have shorter heel marks and are 2 to 3 inches long; the hind tracks are 3 to 4 inches long.*

*(From Pandell and Stall, **Animal Tracks of the Pacific Northwest.**)*

## Raccoons Too Close for Comfort

If a raccoon ever approaches too closely, make yourself appear larger: stand up if sitting, shout, and wave your arms. If necessary, throw stones or send the raccoon off with a dousing of water from a hose or bucket.

If a raccoon continues to act aggressively or strangely (circling, staggering as if drunk or disoriented, or shows unnatural tameness) it may be sick or injured. In such a case, call a wildlife rehabilitator or your local wildlife office.

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**Feed dogs and cats indoors and keep them in at night.** If you must feed your pets outside, do so in late morning or at midday, and pick up food, water bowls, leftovers, and spilled food well before dark every day.

Keep pets indoors at night. If cornered, raccoons may attack dogs and cats. Bite wounds from raccoons can result in fractures and disease transmission.

**Prevent raccoons from entering pet doors.** Keep indoor pet food and any other food away from a pet door. Lock the pet door at night. If it is necessary to have it remain open, put an electronically activated opener on your pet's collar. *Note:* Floodlights or motion detector lights placed above the pet door to scare raccoons are not long-term solutions.

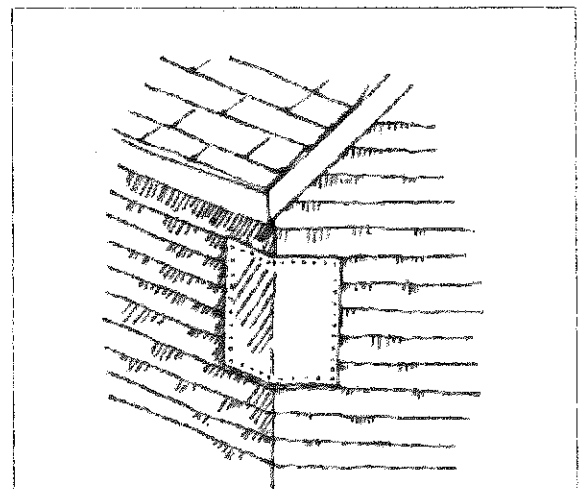
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Clean barbecue grills and grease traps thoroughly following each use.

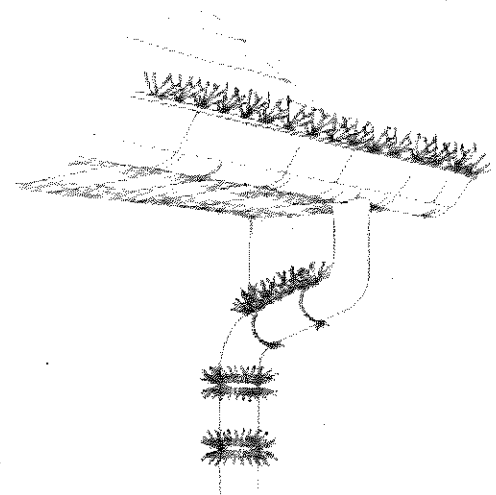
**Eliminate access to denning sites.** Raccoons commonly use chimneys, attics, and spaces under houses, porches, and sheds as den sites. Close any potential entries with ¼-inch mesh hardware cloth, boards, or metal flashing. Make all connections flush and secure to keep mice, rats, and other mammals out. Make sure you don't trap an animal inside when you seal off a potential entry (see the handout "Evicting Animals from Buildings"). For information on securing chimneys, see "Raccoons in Dumpsters and Down Chimneys."

Prevent raccoons from accessing rooftops by trimming tree limbs away from structures and by attaching sheets of metal flashing around corners of buildings (Fig. 3). Commercial products that prevent climbing are available from farm supply centers and bird-control supply companies on the Internet (Fig. 4). Remove vegetation on buildings, such as English ivy, which provide raccoons a way to climb structures and hide their access point inside.

Enclose poultry (chickens, ducks, and turkeys) in a secure outdoor pen and house. Raccoons will eat poultry and their eggs if they can get to them. Signs of raccoon predation include the



**Figure 3.** Raccoon access to rooftops can be eliminated by installing sheets of aluminum flashing, at least 3 feet square, around the corners of buildings.



**Figure 4.** Commercially available metal or plastic spikes can help keep raccoons off of buildings.

(Drawings by Jenifer Rees.)

## Public Health Concerns

A disease that contributes significantly to raccoon mortality is **canine distemper**. Canine distemper is also a common disease fatal to domestic dogs, foxes, coyotes, mink, otters, weasels, and skunks. It is caused by a virus and is spread most often when animals come in contact with the bodily secretions of animals infected with the disease. Gloves, cages, and other objects that have come in contact with infected animals can also contain the virus. The best prevention against canine distemper is to have your dogs vaccinated and kept away from raccoons.

Raccoons in Washington often have **roundworms** (like domestic dogs and cats do, but from a different worm). Raccoon roundworm does not usually cause a serious problem for raccoons. However, roundworm eggs shed in raccoon droppings can cause mild to serious illness in other animals and humans. Although rarely documented anywhere in the United States, raccoon roundworm can infect a person who accidentally ingests or inhales the parasite's eggs.

Prevention consists of never touching or inhaling raccoon droppings, using rubber gloves and a mask when cleaning areas (including traps) that have been occupied by raccoons, and keeping young children and pets away from areas where raccoons concentrate. (If washing raccoon droppings from a roof, watch where the liquid matter is going.) Routinely encourage or assist your children to wash their hands after playing outdoors. Unfortunately, raccoon roundworm eggs can remain alive in soil and other places for several months.

If a person is bitten or scratched by a raccoon, immediately scrub the wound with soap and water. Flush the wound liberally with tap water. In other parts of the United States raccoons can carry **rabies**. Contact your physician and the local health department immediately. If your pet is bitten, follow the same cleansing procedure and contact your veterinarian.

## Legal Status

Because legal status, trapping restrictions, and other information about raccoons change, contact your local wildlife office for updates.

The raccoon is classified as both a furbearer and a game animal (WAC 232-12-007). A hunting or trapping license is required to hunt or trap raccoons during an open season. A property owner or the owner's immediate family, employee, or tenant may kill or trap a raccoon on that property if it is damaging crops or domestic animals (RCW 77.36.030). In such cases, no permit is necessary for the use of live (cage) traps. However, a special trapping permit is required for the use of all traps other than live traps (RCW 77.15.192, 77.15.194; WAC 232-12-142).

It is **unlawful to release wildlife anywhere within the state, other than on the property where it was legally trapped, without a permit to do so** (RCW 77.15.250; WAC 232-12-271). Except for bona fide public or private zoological parks, persons and entities are prohibited from importing raccoons into Washington State without a permit to do so (WAC 246-100-191).

## Additional Information

### Books

Conover, Michael. *Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts: The Science of Wildlife Damage Management*. Boca Raton, FL: Lewis Publishers, 2002.

Hygnstrom, Scott E., et al. *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1994. (Available from: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, 202 Natural Resources Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0819; phone: 402-472-2188; also see Internet Sites below.)

Link, Russell. *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: University of Washington Press and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 1999.

Maser, Chris. *Mammals of the Pacific Northwest: From the Coast to the High Cascades*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998.

Verts, B. J., and Leslie N. Carraway. *Land Mammals of Oregon*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.

### Internet Resources

Burke Museum's Mammals of Washington:  
<http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/>

Internet IPM Resources on Vertebrate Pests (Oregon State University):  
<http://www.ippc.orst.edu/cicp/Pests/vertebrate.htm>

Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage:  
<http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu/>

The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management:  
<http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu/>

Tomahawk Live Traps:  
<http://www.livetraps.com/>

U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Species Life Form Information:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/wildlife/>

Wildlife Control Supplies:  
[http://www.wildlifecontrolsupplies.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=SFNT&Store\\_Code=NWS001](http://www.wildlifecontrolsupplies.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=SFNT&Store_Code=NWS001)

Adapted from "Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest" (see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living.htm>)

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Illustrations: As credited

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Washington  
Department of  
**FISH** and  
**WILDLIFE**

## Tame Your Nuisance Wildlife

*By: Scott Ziegenhagen, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Brian Tuck, OSU Wasco County Extension*

Skunks, opossum, raccoons, coyotes, even deer and elk are all at times prominent members of the "nuisance" family of wildlife. Sure, any kind of wildlife can fit this classification from rattle snakes to woodpeckers to busy little beavers, but often times their presence can be managed, if not avoided all together.

Lets start with the easiest fixes. Ninety percent of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife's (ODFW) calls dealing with raccoons, skunks, opossum, even bear, can be solved by eliminating one thing from the general area, "food". The biggest culprits are dog and cat food left outside either at yours or the neighbor's house. The next most common food source is unsecured garbage and compost piles. If you check around you may even find someone who is specifically feeding the wildlife. Eliminating the food source will usually get rid of even the most chronic problems. The next easiest fix is to block all access under decks, outbuildings, and your house, as these are all preferred nesting/resting places for nuisance wildlife. If none of this works, you can contract with private "critter getter" businesses to come and trap the offending animals for you. If you're more adventurous you can rent, buy, or build your own live trap, obtain a permit from ODFW, and trap the animals yourself. You do not need a permit to trap opossum or fox squirrel. Some animals can be relocated, but that generally is not the best option. Animals relocated into unfamiliar territory, especially those used to urban sources of food and shelter, usually find wild-lands unsuited to their behavioral patterns. Consequently, most relocated animals either starve to death or are taken by predators. Relocated animals could also cause disease outbreaks and/or the spread of non-native species (example: opossum, fox squirrel, and starlings). All nonnative animals must not be relocated. The recommended method for dealing with any surplus urban wildlife is humane euthanasia.

Deer and elk can also be classified as damage causing wildlife. There are again some quick fixes for these animals, but not as many. You can grow landscape plants that are unpalatable, or get some smell and taste deterrent sprays that can help. Some people have had success with hanging scented soaps, human hair, and diesel soaked rags on or near plants they wanted to protect. More tempting crops such as gardens, alfalfa, vine, and orchard plants located in areas that are close to wild-land deer or elk habitat will likely require permanent eight-foot fences for protection. Sustaining or increasing hunting opportunities on your property can help reduce local damage caused by deer or elk populations. If you own 40 contiguous acres or more you can sign up for the Landowner Preference Program (see page 21 of the 2003 Oregon Big Game Regulations) and be guaranteed that not less than two of your friends or family draw antlerless deer/elk tags for your property. ODFW can also issue kill permits for chronic problems that can't seem to be solved by other means. The landowner or their agent can harvest the offending animals under the issued kill permits, field dress, skin, and deliver the carcass to a meat processing business. The meat is then processed and distributed by charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army. Some game meat may also go to individuals who have a medical need

for lean meat.

Coyotes, bobcat, bear, and cougar can also be considered as damage causing wildlife when it comes to loss of livestock and pets. If you are protecting people, livestock, or pets that are in imminent danger from a large predator, the predator can be shot. If a bobcat, cougar, or bear are taken under these circumstances, the incident must be reported to ODFW or the Oregon State Police immediately. Coyotes are not protected and therefore require no reporting. Please remember, as with any use of firearms, you have to be outside city limits, use due caution, and fire only in a known safe direction. Hunting may be an effective means to solve this type of damage also. Chances are you know someone who knows someone who would like the opportunity to harvest coyote, cougar, or bear on your property. In extreme cases, ODFW can authorize the use of dogs (usually Wildlife Services agent under USDA-APHIS) to catch an offending cougar or bear.

What about snakes? The only poisonous snake native to Oregon and found in the wild is the Western Rattlesnake. These snakes are generally not aggressive and if left alone will not bite people. A great majority of rattlesnake bites occur either when a snake is being handled in some way, or accidentally stepped on by an unknowing person. The best way to guard against a snakebite is to educate yourself and your family members to identify rattlesnakes and to leave them alone. If you are trying to keep them out of your yard you can build a small solid fence that is snug to the ground and at least two feet tall. Snakes are attracted to moist cool areas in the hot dry summer months and this includes your watered lawn and shaded areas under your deck, house, or woodpile. If you have a snake that will not leave on its own, it can be removed or made to leave by someone with experience handling rattlesnakes. Rattlesnakes can be killed by private citizens if it becomes necessary. All other snakes native to Oregon are incapable of seriously harming a person and can be safely removed from the area with a stick, shovel, or broom.

Meadow voles (field mice) gophers and moles are also pests that frequently cause problems in orchards, pastures, backyards and many other settings. Control methods include poisons, traps and predators, management of cover and sanitation. Each method has its own set of challenges. Poison baits can work well for gophers and mice, but can include the unintended poisoning of predator species, household pets and even children if not used correctly. Traps work well for mice, gophers and moles, but need to be checked and baited frequently. Use of predator species such as raptors offers a natural alternative but requires the establishment of nesting sites and perches or cover for the four-footed predators to encourage them to use the area. It is important to remember that if you do encourage predators to use your area, that they can also prey on family pets and livestock too. Other controls such as the elimination of protective cover near crops and buildings will help discourage field mice. Sanitation is also a good tool in discouraging field mice. Like with skunks and raccoons, eliminating food sources such as pet food, birdseed, etc., will discourage field mice in and around buildings and in fields. Oregon State University Extension Service has several excellent publications available concerning field mice, gofer and mole control around the home and farmstead.

If you come across injured or abandoned wildlife, in most cases, it is best to let nature take its course and not to disturb the animal in question. First, it must be determined without a reasonable doubt that the animal is orphaned or injured to the point that it will not survive on its

own. If the animal is considered to be native to the area and not part of an over abundant population, or is State or Federally recognized as a species of concern, it could be a candidate for rehabilitation. There are private licensed rehabilitators that can work with most kinds of animals if their facilities have the space available. If you can be certain that the animal is suffering from a soon to be fatal wound you can, as humanely as possible, put it out of its misery. This is legal for concerned citizens to do, just make sure that you immediately inform local ODFW, or Oregon State Police personnel of the circumstances involved. You may not take the animal into your possession.

Animals that ODFW does not have jurisdiction over are livestock, stray pets, already dead animals, or migratory birds, which includes, waterfowl and most songbirds. Your county Animal Control Officer deals with pet issues, the Oregon Department of Agriculture deals with livestock, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services deals with migratory birds. If you find dead wildlife on your property, you can double bag it and put it in your trash, as most garbage services will take animals bagged in this manner. If there is a larger animal that is impeding traffic on a public roadway under county or state jurisdiction, they may be able to send someone out to remove the animal. If you have a larger animal dead on your property, and you have a place to bury it or just pull it down wind from your house, that is going to be your best option. You can also spread lime on the carcass to assist decomposition and reduce odor.

As with any situation dealing with wild animals, there are an infinite number of problems and solutions, so here is a quick flow chart that may help you figure out whom you can contact for help or advice.

### Technical Resources

(Note, numbers and websites deal primarily with Oregon wildlife agencies)

Problem Animal	Contact Agency	Initial Contact Phone #
Wild free ranging Big Game Species: Deer, Elk, Antelope, Bighorn Sheep, Bear, Cougar, Bobcat	OR Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) <a href="http://www.dfw.state.or.us">www.dfw.state.or.us</a>	Local ODFW office 541-296-4628
Coyotes, Cougar, Bear, Beaver	USDA-APHIS : Wildlife Services <a href="http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws">www.aphis.usda.gov/ws</a> With ODFW	Wasco County Wildlife Services Agent-Jon Belozer 541-395-2433



Raccoon, Beaver, Fox, River Otter, Badger, Rabbit, Chipmunk, Squirrel, Skunks, Opossums, Reptiles, Amphibians	ODFW: with contact numbers for private animal control business or permit to trap yourself	Local ODFW office 541-296-4628
Gophers, moles, field mice in crops and around homes and farmsteads	OSU or WSU Extension Office	Wasco County Extension 541- 296-5494
Upland Birds: Quail, Chukar, Huns, Pheasant, Grouse, Wild Turkeys	ODFW	503 - 947 - 6286 or Local ODFW office 541-296-4628
Livestock: Cattle, Domestic Sheep, Horses, Chickens, Pigs, etc.	OR Department of Agriculture: Brand Inspector <a href="http://www.oda.state.or.us">www.oda.state.or.us</a>	503 - 986 - 4681 541-296-1012 (Auction Sales Company)
Domestic pets: Dogs, Cats, etc.	County animal control officer	Wasco County Animal Control Office, 541-296-5189
Migratory birds: Waterfowl, Vultures Hawks, Eagles, Owls, Crow, Raven Magpies, Starlings, Gulls, Etc.	USDA-APHIS : Wildlife Services W/ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service <a href="http://www.fws.gov">www.fws.gov</a>	<b>Wasco County</b> Wildlife Services Agent Jon Belozar: 541-395-2433
Injured or orphaned wildlife	Wildlife Rescue of The Gorge : Klickitat County Rowena Wildlife Clinic : Wasco, Sherman, Hood River Counties Portland Audubon Society : <a href="http://www.audubonportland.org">www.audubonportland.org</a>	509 - 538 - 2308 541 - 478 - 2584 503 - 292 - 0304

### **Additional Resources**

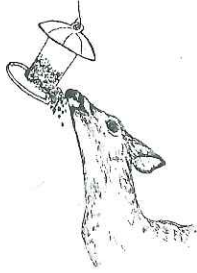
The WSU Klickitat County Extension Office and the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District have plans to build nesting boxes for owls and perches for raptors. The WSU Klickitat County Extension Office phone number is (509) 773-5718 and the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District phone number is (541) 298-8559 ext. 3. WSU also has a number of good wildlife management publications and you can access them through their web site at: <http://cru84.cahe.wsu.edu/cgi-bin/pubs/index.html>

OSU Extension Service has a number of publications relating to identification and control of voles (field mice), gophers and moles as well as publications relating to reducing deer damage through repellents and fencing. You can also access OSU Publications through their web site at: <http://eesc.oregonstate.edu/>

There is also an excellent web site put out by the University of Nebraska titled "The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management" that has a host of publications and hints on handling wildlife damage issues. The web site can be found at <http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu/>

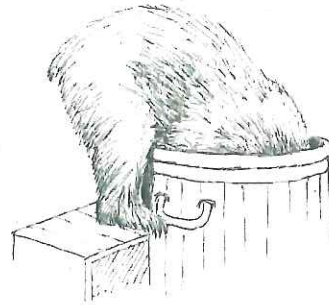
Those wanting to rent or buy live animal traps can often find them at local feed stores. They are currently available in The Dalles.

## FEEDING WILDLIFE

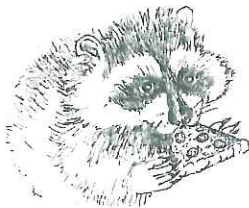


There has been a huge growth in the number of people who, in addition to feeding birds, also directly or indirectly feed deer, bear and other animals around their homes and cabins. Feeding of wildlife places wildlife at risk and puts them on a collision course with humans. Help keep wildlife from coming into conflict with people because when that happens, everyone loses.

**Montana Restrictions and Regulations** prohibits any person from providing supplemental feed attractants to game animals by: *purposely or knowingly attracting bears with supplemental feed attractants... or purposely or knowingly providing supplemental feed attractants in a manner that results in an artificial concentration of game animals that may potentially contribute to the transmission of disease or that constitutes a threat to public safety...* "Supplemental feed attractant" means any food, garbage, or other attractant for game animals.



Although we like to think that we are helping wildlife by providing food, the reality is that:

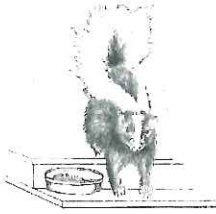


- Supplemental feeding encourages wildlife to become dependent on handouts that are not part of their natural diets.
- Human foods are usually nutritionally inadequate for wildlife and may lead to subsequent health problems.
- Young animals that are taught to depend on humans sometimes never develop normal foraging behavior, and could starve if the artificial food sources are removed or more likely become nuisances and come in conflict with humans.
- Wildlife lose their fear of humans and learn that they can boldly forage for human food, consequently conflicts, nuisance behavior, and risks to human safety are sure to occur.
- Wild animals being fed by humans may congregate in unnaturally high numbers, and this is the perfect opportunity for diseases to spread. As populations of deer, raccoons, skunks and others grow unnaturally from being fed, a small number of diseased animals mixed in close quarters with a large group spread the disease to the whole group. Disease such as rabies, distemper and many others which are dependent on high animal populations.
- Artificial feeding increases wild animal populations, which in turn increases stress. Such stressful conditions increase the incidence of fighting and injury among animals.



- Feeding wildlife, especially prey species such as deer, squirrels and rabbits, often causes a domino or food chain effect. Due to such feeding, the prey densities increase, which in turn attracts predators such as coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions. Example: Increase deer numbers in your yard and you may be inviting a mountain lion for a free meal.

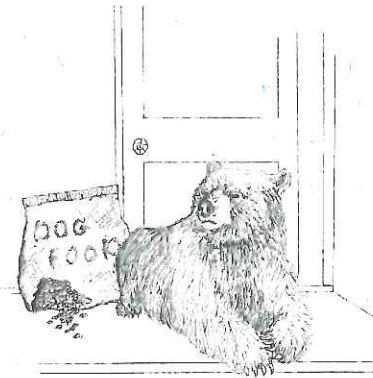
Reducing conflicts between people and wildlife must be a neighborhood or community effort to be truly effective. If one person in a neighborhood is still feeding wildlife, that person is attracting the animals to the whole neighborhood. There are many complaints from people whose neighbors have been feeding wild animals. Often, the wildlife have become a nuisance and the caller wants to remove or kill them. Many people do not think about the neighborhood impact when they start feeding wildlife. Work with your neighbors and create a community-wide effort.



**Remember: when people and wildlife interact, wildlife often ends up losing. Always enjoy wildlife from a distance!**

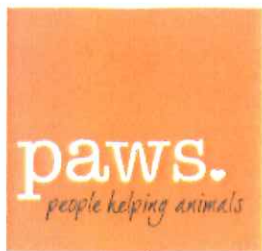
**Does this mean backyard bird feeding is wrong?** No. However, you should not feed birds when there is reasonable assumption that any animals may come to harm. While feeding birds in your backyard is generally not an activity that fits into this category, some conditions may warrant curtailing the provision of such food sources. For example, during the warmer months, when natural food sources are more readily available, it's usually best to reduce the amount of feed you put out each day or suspend feeding altogether, especially if deer, bears or other animals are getting into the feed. Remember that it's also important to maintain safe, clean feeding stations in order to prevent the spread of disease.

### What can you do



- Do not feed your pets outside, or if you must, feed them outside during the day, and take food and water bowls inside during the night.
- Keep garbage in sturdy garbage cans with secure lids.
- Rinse cans and bottles before you store them for recycling.
- Keep your compost pile fenced from animals, or use a closed compost container.
- Do not leave food out for animals.
- Do not feed animals by hand or try to lure them into your house or yard.
- Harvest your fruit trees when the fruit ripens and remove any fruit that falls on the ground.
- If bears or other potentially dangerous animals appear remove bird feeders and other sources of food until they leave. Bears love sunflower seeds and suet and will come right up to your house to get them. They also love to clean your dirty barbecue grill for you.
- Birdfeeders should be scrubbed clean at least once a week and disinfected with a ten-percent solution of bleach water. Allow the feeder to air dry before refilling it with seed. Clean and disinfect bird baths in a similar fashion.

**Note:** For an in-depth look at the problems associated with feeding wildlife read *Feeding Wildlife...Just Say No!* a Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) publication available through their website at [www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org](http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org)



# The Effects of Feeding Wildlife

Many people enjoy feeding wildlife because it allows them to have close contact with the animals, or because they believe they are helping the animals survive. While seeing wild animals up close can be enjoyable, providing wild animals with a steady, human-supplied food source nearly always leads to problems for both the animals and humans.

There are many good reasons not to feed wildlife including:

1. **When young wild animals are taught to depend on a human-provided food source, they may not fully develop essential foraging skills.** Animals who are raised relying on humans for food may struggle to survive in the absence of that artificial food source when they disperse from their parents' territory.
2. **Wild animals who are used to being fed by humans commonly lose their fear of people.** Animals who are unafraid of people will approach them for food, and are sometimes mistaken as rabid, aggressive or mean, then killed for that behavior. They also become easy targets for kids with BB guns and others who mean them harm. An instinctive wariness of people is important to a wild animal's survival.
3. **The food humans usually feed to wild animals is not nutritionally complete, and it can cause serious health problems for the animals, especially when they are young and still developing.** Most wild animals are opportunistic and will concentrate on the easiest food source available. When a constant human-provided food source is available, animals who would normally have a varied diet may switch to eating mainly this constantly available food. Just like humans, most wild animals need a variety of foods in their diet, and if they fill up on "junk" food, they will not get the nutrients they need to stay healthy. Because most people will feed animals food that they have in their house - people food - which bears no resemblance to what the animals eat in the wild, it really is junk food to the animals.
4. **A constant, human-provided food source may attract many more wild animals to the area than would normally be found there.** Who doesn't like a free meal? When food is readily available, animals will gather in abnormally large numbers. This means that if one animal in the group has an illness or disease, it can spread throughout the group. Many wild animals do not interact with others of their own species except during mating season and when raising their young. This is one way to limit diseases among a wild population. By gathering these animals together in unnatural groups, these diseases can spread much more quickly and can destroy a large number of animals.
5. **Reproduction rates may also be affected when an artificial food source is readily available.** In the wild, the number of animals being born is often directly related to the amount of natural food available. The number of animals surviving will also depend on how much food is available. This is nature's way of keeping a balance. When an unnatural food supply becomes available, animals may produce more young and soon there may be more animals living in the area than what the natural food sources can support.
6. **We commonly receive phone calls at the PAWS Wildlife Center from people whose neighbors have been feeding wild animals.** Often, the wild animals have become an incredible nuisance and the caller wants to kill or remove them. Many people do not think about the neighborhood impact when they start feeding wildlife. Wild animals do not usually discriminate between one person and another, and will often start pestering neighbors. The animals may also cause damage to homes and property because they expect to be fed and have lost their fear of people.

The best thing you can do to care for the wild animals on your property is to give them habitat, not handouts. [Naturescaping](#) is a great way to provide the animals with natural sources of food and shelter that will not put them in danger the way a human-provided food source will. You will still be able to enjoy wildlife on your property, but at a safe distance for both you and the animals.

If you are looking for a positive way to get closer to wild animals, consider [volunteering](#) at a wildlife rehabilitation center, such as PAWS, where hundreds of injured and orphaned animals are in need of a little human help.



[Donate Now!](#)

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## Raccoons

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Raccoons are curious and smart wild animals that are highly adaptable to living in developed areas near humans. They, like us, are in the pursuit of happiness – food and shelter. Their bandit mask and ringed tail distinguishes them from other common urban wild mammals like skunks and opossums. However, it is their peculiar food "washing" behaviour and their incredible dexterity in manipulating all that they touch, that is quite unique.

## Raccoon basics

Often labeled as dumpster-divers, pond-raiders, and garden-destroyers, raccoons have a bad wrap for making a mess in pursuit of the perfect meal. However, their role as scavengers in fact makes them valuable in nature by cleaning up the unwanted foods from other animals. Most active at night, raccoons also forage during the day when resources are available. As intelligent as dogs and cats, they have routines for gathering food and seeking shelter, such as remembering where the best grapes are grown and where the freshest cat food is left out in their neighbourhood. **But an easy meal from garbage or pet food is not a healthy staple for their diet and decreases their fear of humans, which sadly will increase their chance of being injured or killed.**



Just as they are opportunistic when it comes to food, raccoons are not picky about shelter either. In nature, raccoons will den in tree cavities, brush piles, old stump and abandoned burrows. But in developed areas, a chimney, attic, crawl space, shed, storm sewer, haystacks and barn lofts, make a comfortable resting area. Always prepared, raccoons will usually have more than one den site ready for use at one time in case they need to move out of an area quickly.

## Was it a raccoon?

You can identify a raccoon with their distinct tracks – they have five toes on the front and hind feet and tracks are usually paired, with the left hind foot placed beside the right forefoot in stride.



## Possible conflicts and solutions

A number of people think they are helping raccoons by feeding them, sustaining their bad behaviour and inevitably end up killing them with kindness. Others will even attempt to keep and raise baby raccoons. It is **ILLEGAL** to keep raccoons as pets in B.C. and by intentionally feeding them inside or outside the home, people are in fact harming the animals. Download our brochure [Don't feed the animals - Keeping wildlife healthy and wild](#) to learn more or print off and drop in a neighbours mailbox if you suspect they are feeding raccoons.

If you believe that a baby raccoon has been orphaned (loud sounds coming from young, dead mom on road) contact a [professional wildlife rehabilitator](#) in your area.

Raccoons are not dangerous to people, but when they lose their fear of people, they may be aggressive towards food and injure our pets. If a raccoon approaches you: yell, stamp your feet, clap your hands and make noise to scare the raccoon away. Note that raccoons are **NOT** rabies carriers in B.C. However, they can carry a roundworm parasite that is very dangerous to humans and is passed through their feces. Wear a protective mask, gloves and clothing when cleaning areas inhabited by raccoons. Raccoon "latrines" are like community bathrooms – sites where multiple raccoons repeatedly deposit fresh feces on top of old feces in a particular area in their environment. It is important to recognize and clean them when they occur near your house, garden, or anywhere children may play.

## Got raccoons? How to encourage them to move along

First, consider the time of year as babies may be in dens starting as early as March. The best time to address resident raccoon problems is before March or after August as the potential to separate a mother from its young is too high.

Use mild harassment techniques that are not harmful to the raccoons or their babies. **To start, ensure that all potential food sources are eliminated and determine where they may be residing on your property.**



Do-it-yourself exclusion techniques are humane and inexpensive, but may take a little patience:

- Place a flashlight or work light in the den site
- Play a radio (with a talk radio station) near the den site
- Place ammonia-soaked rags in a plastic container, tape-shut the lid and punch enough holes in the lid so the smell permeates. Place one or more containers in the den or at the entry points if inside is not accessible. Refill the ammonia as needed every couple days if effect is not working.

In most cases such techniques disturb the raccoons enough that they will want to move out and mothers will even take their babies, one-by-one, to a back-up den site. But you must give them sufficient time to move their young and double check the den before closing up the site.

To prevent raccoons from climbing fruit trees, wrap two-foot-wide sheet metal around the trunk of trees at two feet above the ground and trim branches that are providing other access, such as from rooftops or fences.

Raccoons will frequently roll up new garden sod while looking for bugs. Use non-toxic natural **Diatomaceous Earth** on your lawn to ensure there are no bugs to be found. If a raccoon is raiding your pond, try placing PVC tubes at least 2 ft in length in your pond so the fish can hide inside. Ponds are free buffets for raccoons, herons and other wildlife and none of them know how much you spent on your exotic fish! Nets are dangerous and electrical fences can be harmful. Understand that the wildlife only see your fish as an easy meal so challenge yourself to outsmart them!

No luck on your own? Call the experts – contact a nuisance wildlife management company that uses only exclusion practices and does not trap!

## Trapping is not the solution

Trapping is inhumane, ineffective and restricted by regional wildlife regulations. Even if you use a live trap, relocating a raccoon to another location is usually a death-sentence. The raccoon will be in danger because it is likely now in the territory of another raccoon as they are widely distributed. A large percentage of wildlife that is removed from the city generally does not survive and just moves the problem to someone else's backyard. Raccoons can be injured in traps and even if they were removed, it will only be a matter of time before another raccoon moves in to claim the existing food source and shelter. Poisoning is also inhumane and could also kill other wild animals or pets.

We want to achieve a raccoon population balance within the urban environment based on available natural food supply. In order to do this we need to keep the food supply restricted by cleaning up garbage, and preventing access to pet food. We can learn to live with raccoons by respecting that they are wild animals and treating them as such.

## Prevention is the key to co-existing

- Never attempt to feed any wildlife as doing so causes them to they lose their fear of humans. This makes them more likely to being hit by cars or trapped and killed.
- Supervise all pets closely outdoors, keeping them indoors from dusk to dawn.
- The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is by making it an indoor pet. An outdoor-enclosed cat run is also an option.
- Maintain sheds, garages and access to crawl spaces and attics to prevent unwelcome tenants.

## Don't feed the raccoons

Make sure you aren't unknowingly making your home an attractive place to stay for raccoons. Check that:

- Garbage bins and composts are secured
- Fruit fallen from trees is not left on the ground
- Bird feeders are not overflowing with seeds
- Pets are fed inside and no pet food is left outside

# Raccoon

*Living in Harmony with Your Wild Neighbors*



**W**HAT do you get when you combine intelligence, manual dexterity, and a nocturnal lifestyle? Well, in the case of the raccoon, you have an animal well-suited to living near people.

Raccoons are one of the most charismatic species of animals found in North America. Given their superb ability to adapt to, and even exploit, changing environmental conditions, it's not too surprising that raccoons are now common residents in cities, towns, and suburbs.

Technically, raccoons are carnivores. Their diet, however, is more accurately described as omnivorous. They readily consume both animal and plant matter, and their diet varies with locality, season, and availability.

In addition to eating wild foods, raccoons aren't averse to raiding gardens, garbage cans, bird feeders, fish ponds—even kitchen cabinets. Raccoons have been known to use door knobs, so cabinet doors are hardly a challenge. And a pet door is an open invitation.

Chimneys, porches, and attics are all attractive denning sites from the raccoon perspective. Add readily

accessible trash cans, or pet food and water bowls, and you've got the raccoon equivalent of a Hilton.

Is it any wonder that conflicts arise between raccoons and their human neighbors? Luckily for both, a little patience and understanding can go a long way toward resolving any problems.

Humane methods of conflict prevention and resolution have proven to be less costly and less stressful than removal of a resident animal for both wildlife and homeowners. While removal may seem like a solution, it usually only creates an enticing vacancy for another animal in search of a ready-made home.

People can live in harmony with wildlife—you just have to know your wild neighbors!



## Raccoon Facts— GEE WHIZ

The word "raccoon" is derived from *arakun*, an Algonquin word meaning "he scratches with his hands."

Raccoons' varied vocal repertoire includes purrs, whimpers, snarls, growls, hisses, screams, and whinnies.

Raccoons walk flat-footed, like elephants, bears, and humans.

Raccoons can descend a tree headfirst—by rotating the hind feet 180 degrees.

A raccoon hand has ten times as many nerve endings as a human hand.

Raccoons are found throughout most of North and Central America (see map).



## Vital Statistics

**Description:** Highly variable, with an easily recognizable black facial mask and ringed tail.

**Habitat:** Varied, including seashores, prairies, farmland, wooded areas, and suburban and urban areas.

**Diet:** Omnivorous

**Adult Length:** 2 to 4 ft. (600 to 1,200 mm) from nose to tail tip.

**Adult Weight:** 5 to 40 lbs. (2 to 18 kg)

**Activity:** Generally, but not strictly, nocturnal.

**Birthing Season:** From March to May; however, in southern U.S., may occur year-round.

**Age When Independent:** Between 6 and 12 months.

# Raccoon

## Seasonal Considerations

An understanding of the yearly activities of raccoons will help with damage identification and conflict prevention planning.

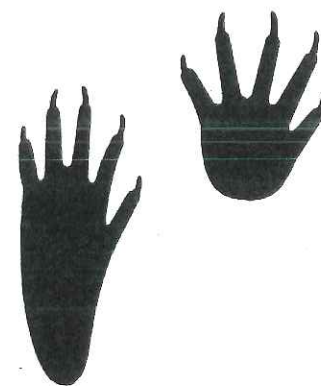
**SPRING:** Raccoon cubs are born from early spring through early summer, so homeowners should be very careful when trying to exclude raccoons from buildings at these times. Cubs stay at the den site for about two months, and during this time the mother will leave each day to find food. If the mother is locked out with the cubs inside, she will do considerable damage trying to reach them. If she is trapped and removed at this time, the cubs will starve to death. This is the time for homeowners to observe where the mother is entering the building and begin making plans for repairs once the young have left to accompany her on nightly excursions.

**SUMMER:** Attics often become too hot for comfort, so raccoons naturally begin to seek shelter under decks and patios, or in wooded areas.

**FALL:** Raccoons begin to seek shelter and extra food. Now is the time to inspect your home and make any repairs, checking first to make sure that animals have not moved inside. The harassment techniques described in this fact sheet often work especially well during this time of year.

**WINTER:** Severe weather may cause raccoons to stay in their dens for a week or longer. Raccoons don't hibernate, but they do conserve energy by limiting activity. Exclusion efforts may cause animals to be trapped inside. Homes may be damaged as animals try to escape. Animals who cannot escape will die of starvation.

## Damage Identification



**B**EFORE you begin taking steps to resolve a raccoon problem, you'll need to do a little detective work to make sure that the animal you're dealing with is really a raccoon. Raccoons are primarily nocturnal, so they usually begin their day as the sun is setting. Using the techniques described in this fact sheet, identify the likely entrance or entrances. Find a place, not too

close, where you can sit quietly and watch for the animal to leave.

If you're not able to observe the animal coming or going, tracks are one of the best ways to identify raccoon presence. Flour, cornstarch, and other nontoxic powders can be used to check for footprints on hard surfaces, such as sidewalks and roofing shingles.

Raccoons can be heard moving around in attics and chimneys at dusk

and just before sunrise. Tree squirrels will be active by day and quiet at night, while flying squirrels are nocturnal. Squirrels are considerably smaller than raccoons and their movements tend to be quick and light—they scurry. Raccoons sound more like Sumo wrestlers practicing.

If young cubs are present, you may hear chittering or purring sounds, especially when the mother returns to the den. These noises will become louder as the young animals grow and develop.

Raccoon signs can be confused at times with opossums and skunks. Skunks are burrowers rather than climbers, so they rarely den in attics and chimneys—and that signature scent is a real tip-off. Opossums are generally slower and more deliberate than raccoons.

## Building Inspection and Damage Prevention

**C**AREFUL attention to prevention of wildlife conflicts is, of course, the simplest, most economical, and humane course of action. A periodic inspection of buildings will reveal potential entry sites. In the case of buildings with two or more stories, binoculars can help immeasurably.

Raccoons are good climbers, and they may gain access to roofs using overhanging branches, television towers, and downspouts. The entrance hole used by adult raccoons can be quite small. Pay particular attention to eaves, deteriorating boards, warped siding, loose shingles, and areas where the roof and house join.

Toilet areas (a.k.a. latrines) may be seen on roofs or in attics. It is important to avoid unprotected contact

with any fecal material found. Inside attics, check for insulation compacted into four-inch wide trails or gathered into a pile two to three feet in diameter.

### Household Repairs

- Replace worn, curled, cracked, or missing shingles.
- Cover chimneys with approved chimney caps, available at hardware stores and from chimney maintenance professionals.
- Inspect and repair any attic openings with one-half inch, heavy-duty, rust-proof hardware cloth. Chicken wire isn't strong enough for exclusion purposes.
- Trim overhanging branches and remove unused TV towers.
- Remove leaves from roofs and gutters to prevent wood rot.



Homeowners should make arrangements to have professionals complete these repairs if they are uncomfortable with heights or if conditions on the roof are hazardous.

## Problem Solving



**Y**OUR first option is to wait things out—many problems resolve themselves within a few days or weeks. A second option is the use of harassment methods to encourage animals to leave. Both of these approaches require some patience, but results are long-term, whereas “quick fix” approaches inevitably require repetition.

- Place a battery-operated radio in the den area, tuned to a talk or rock station, and turn up the volume.
- Leave attic lights on.
- Tape a weak barrier, such as

newspaper or window screening, over the entrance to help you determine if the animal has left. Once you are *absolutely* certain that *all* the animals are gone, repairs and raccoon-proofing operations can begin. Remember that animals locked inside can cause a great deal of damage trying to get out. Those who are unsuccessful will suffer a cruel death from starvation and thirst.

### Raccoons under Decks

Use harassment techniques until the animal leaves; then, secure the perimeter of the deck or patio with galvanized steel screen in an “L” shape to prevent digging under the barrier.

### Raiding Garbage

Raccoons will return to a reliable source of garbage, so discourage this behavior by placing cans at the curb on the day of pick-up rather than the night before, and place cans inside a shed or garage in between pick-ups. Use containers with tight-fitting lids.

### Gardens and Feeders

Raccoons are attracted to fruits, corn, birdseed, and suet. There are

commercially available repellents that can be used to deter raccoons, but the effect is temporary. Branches lower than three feet from the ground may need to be trimmed. Fruit trees and bird feeder poles can be protected with conical metal guards that keep the animals from climbing.

### Raccoons in Chimneys

First, find out if the animal is denning or trapped. Never smoke any animal out of a chimney. In most chimneys, an adult raccoon can climb in or out at will, but young animals, squirrels, opossums, and some birds may not be able to leave on their own.

Assuming the animal can leave, harassment techniques can be used to encourage the raccoon to move along. After the animal has left, prevent further problems by installing an approved chimney cap.

Get help from a professional if the animal fails to leave or is loose inside the house. Call your local humane society or wildlife rehabilitation center for advice.

# Raccoon

## Injured or Orphaned Animals

**W**ILDLIFE rehabilitation centers provide care for injured and orphaned wildlife until the animals can be released back to the wild. In most states, wildlife rehabilitation can be practiced only by someone with state and/or federal licenses.

Never try to capture or handle an injured, ill, or orphaned raccoon on your own. Raccoons of any age are capable of giving nasty bites or scratches. Adult raccoons are formidable animals, even when weakened by disease or injury. A wildlife rehabilitator or humane society can advise you on the best course of action if you find an animal in distress. Always keep your own safety in mind.

Orphaned raccoons are particularly endearing, and the concept of raising a cub on your own, either with the idea of turning him loose or keeping him as a pet, can seem appealing. Raccoons make terrible pets, though. They are wild animals capable of biting, scratching, and destroying household items and property. **DO NOT** attempt to raise an orphaned raccoon.

Raccoon cubs, like all other infants, have unique nutritional requirements. Infant formulas available at pet stores may claim to be appropriate for all small mammals, but this is not true. Problems that result from an inappropriate diet, such as metabolic bone disease (also known as rickets), can debilitate an animal for life.

Unless behavioral and developmental requirements are addressed, a young raccoon may not be capable of surviving life in the wild. In addition, municipal ordinances often prohibit keeping a wild animal as a pet. Zoos and wildlife centers are rarely an option for unwanted, hand-raised raccoons. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators can provide appropriate care for wild animals.

Ask your local humane society to recommend a wildlife rehabilitator in your area.



## Consequences of Feeding

**T**HE idea of offering food to raccoons can be tempting. But feeding raccoons can quickly get out of control. While one or two animals can be cute, a half dozen or more can begin to feel like an invasion. And if food is available, even food left in pet bowls, more creatures will certainly arrive.

Remember—you may be willing to put up with overturned garbage cans and barking dogs, but your neighbors might not be as tolerant. Large aggregations of raccoons can pose serious health risks.

Overcrowding increases the risk of disease transmission between these normally dispersed animals. As they become accustomed to the sights and sounds of humans, raccoons will begin to lose their natural fear—a risky proposition for any wild animal. Before long, what began as a kind-hearted gesture ends up endangering the very creatures you had intended to help.

### Human Health Concerns

*Raccoons are susceptible to a number of diseases, including canine distemper, parvo, pneumonia, tuberculosis, encephalitis, listeriosis, trichinosis, coccidiosis, and rabies. The following diseases pose the most serious health risk for humans and their pets.*

#### Rabies

Raccoons are classified as a rabies vector species, along with foxes, skunks, and bats. In spite of all the concern and fear surrounding this disease, advances in public education, vaccination of pets, and post-exposure treatment have greatly reduced the risk to humans from this disease. There has never been a documented human death resulting from the raccoon strain of rabies.

#### Roundworm

*Baylisascaris procyonis* in raccoons is well-documented, and the parasite is a public health concern. The parasite is transmitted through the ingestion of eggs passed in feces, so the key to dealing with this problem is public awareness. Avoidance of raccoon latrines is imperative. Children should be prevented from playing in areas where raccoons have defecated. In addition, proper hygiene is crucial wherever raccoons have been kept, housed, or transported.

#### Leptospirosis

Raccoons are capable of carrying and transmitting this disease, but the incidence is so low as to be of concern only in people who routinely come into close contact with these animals, such as wildlife rehabilitators or animal control officers.

#### Distemper

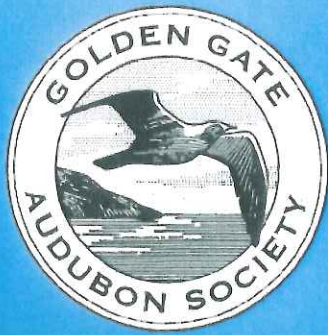
This disease is similar to rabies and can also affect some pets. However, it does not pose a threat to humans. Contact your veterinarian to discuss any concerns, and make sure that your pets are vaccinated annually against this and other diseases. Keeping your pets indoors and/or not allowing them to roam freely will also help avoid this disease.

*The HSUS provides fact sheets on a variety of topics. For additional information contact:*

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037  
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[www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) • [www.wildneighbors.org](http://www.wildneighbors.org)

Information on humane prevention of raccoon conflicts was prepared by Kieran Lindsey, Natural Assets Consulting, Cedar Crest, New Mexico, and reviewed by Laura Simon, The Fund for Animals, New York, New York.



# FEEDING WILDLIFE:

It's hard to resist feeding the wildlife but please don't – for their health and your safety.

## THEIR HEALTH

- The native animals who live here, including birds, squirrels, raccoons, and other wildlife, need nature's diet to be healthy.
- Human food is "junk food" for wildlife. Well-intentioned handouts may cause disease, injury, and even death for the animals.
- Providing unnatural food encourages wildlife to congregate in large numbers, leading to territorial fighting, attacks by predators, and being hit by cars.
- Animals you feed today may be killed as "pests" tomorrow. Don't harm wildlife with your kindness...help them remain healthy, safe, and free.

## YOUR SAFETY

Native animals who eat human food...

- May bite, scratch or threaten other visitors.
- May come into conflict with your pets.
- May spread disease.



**FED WILDLIFE IS DEAD WILDLIFE. IF YOU CARE, DON'T FEED!**

Feeding wildlife is illegal. San Francisco Park Code Sec. 5.07.(b)  
Report wildlife feeding to SF Animal Care & Control, 415.554.9400



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# Corvallis

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## URBAN RACCOONS



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Raccoons are opportunistic, omnivorous (they will eat plant and animal matter), and are very good at getting into places where you may not want them.

The best way to keep raccoons from becoming a problem is to eliminate human-provided sources of food and shelter.

Keep all human and pet food away from raccoons by keeping garbage in secure trash cans, putting compost in an enclosed container, and feeding your pets indoors.

If raccoons are raiding your garden, motion-sensitive lights, electric lights, electric fences, and making loud noises when they are present may deter them until you can harvest your crops.

Raccoons often seek shelter in chimneys, attics, and under porches and houses. During the spring and summer, assume that there are babies present, but in the fall or winter use the techniques described previously to get them to move away. After they have left, you can cover up all possible entrances to prevent them from returning.



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# Vancouver raccoon attack prompts warnings

Last Updated: Friday, September 11, 2009 | 6:25 AM PT

[CBC News](#)



*Experts say that feeding raccoons in urban areas can lead to unpleasant interactions with the animals. (CBC)*

An attack on a woman in Vancouver's West End has experts warning people about getting too close to urban wildlife.

The unidentified woman was bitten repeatedly by a raccoon in August while walking her dog, after she tried to intervene when the two animals began to fight.

She was hospitalized but is now recovering.

Her injuries serve as a reminder of just how dangerous those animals can be, according to Stanley Park conservation manager Robyn Worcester.

"Raccoons in the park do follow people and look for handouts and they do bite people on a regular basis," Worcester told CBC News.

Stanley Park is located in the city's heavily populated West End.

"Unfortunately some of the people who get bitten are tourists," Worcester said. "They see these cute, fluffy, panda bear-looking things and they're tame, they come up to you, and that's when people get bitten."

Raccoons are included among the top four pest complaints, according to Peter Steinfort, owner of Care Pest and Wildlife Control.

"Damage is probably one of the most major complaints," said Steinfort.

Raccoons can get into sheds, home crawlspaces and attics to nest.

## Can attack children

"They are also known to go after small pets and in some extreme cases, small children if they feel threatened in any way," said Steinfort.

He said he believes raccoon numbers are on the rise and Worcester estimated there were hundreds living

in the city.

The animals usually prefer to run from trouble and will only get aggressive if they're cornered or protecting their young. But with more raccoons around, confrontations are more likely.

Residents are urged not to feed raccoons, not to leave fruit or other food lying around their property and not to provide shelter for them.

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### Officials tracking distemper outbreak in raccoons

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January 26, 2013

By **Mark Freeman**  
Mail Tribune

Wildlife biologists are investigating an apparent outbreak of canine distemper that's racing through the local raccoon population.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the past two weeks has collected eight raccoons that turned up dead in Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Jacksonville and south Medford, and six already have been confirmed as suffering from distemper.

Last year six dead raccoons collected in Jackson and Josephine counties tested positive for the disease, said Mark Vargas, ODFW's Rogue District wildlife biologist.

"We've had it before in foxes, and now we're starting to see it a lot more in raccoons," Vargas says. "When the raccoon population gets high, you often see distemper outbreaks, and I don't think there's a storm drain in Jackson County without a family of 'coons in it."

Distemper does not affect people, but pets are susceptible, particularly if pet owners haven't kept up with distemper vaccinations, Vargas said.

Distemper is a highly contagious and generally fatal virus that regularly spikes in urban areas of the Pacific Northwest when local populations of raccoons, skunks and other animals surge.

Infected animals often have runny noses and eyes, are listless in daylight, and often appear disoriented and uninterested in food or water.

Biologists are keeping tabs on distemper-infected raccoons and foxes around people, Vargas said, because symptoms can be similar to rabies. Biologists want to check every raccoon that died near people to test for distemper and rabies, which can pose health threats to people.

Anyone who finds a dead raccoon near a house should call ODFW at 541-826-8778 to report it. If possible, double-bag it, and wear gloves when handling it, Vargas said.

Residents who find a live raccoon with distemper symptoms can euthanize it if they live outside of city limits, Vargas said. Biologists don't plan to go out to find and euthanize sickly raccoons, he said.

Similar outbreaks swept through the Rogue Valley's raccoon populations in the early 1990s and mid-2000s.

In a 2005-06 outbreak, ODFW banned the trapping and release of raccoons in the wild, and the outbreak eventually stopped. But biologists said it was unproven that the ban on releases alone ended the outbreak.

The cause of the outbreaks was unknown, but animals can spread it from nose-to-nose contact or a shared food source, which is not common in the wild and is associated with people feeding wildlife.

Humans should avoid touching any wild animals, especially those suspected of carrying a disease, Vargas said.

Reach reporter Mark Freeman at 541-776-4470 or [mfreeman@mailtribune.com](mailto:mfreeman@mailtribune.com).

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**SCAM WATCH**  
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**Time of year:** Any time of year. Calls from customers often peak from mid-March through mid-May, when the females are looking for den sites in which to raise their young. From mid-May through July, customers may call about "sick" or "rabid" raccoons that are active during the day (see explanation below). From the late summer through the fall, raccoons may dig through lawns and turf in search of grubs.

#### **What are they doing?**

1. They den in attics, chimneys, sheds, and barns, annoying people with their noise and odors.
2. Their nest materials might block a vent, causing a fire hazard. They also chew on wires.
3. Raccoons can damage buildings, either purposefully, to gain entry or create a nesting area, or accidentally, because they're heavy enough to bend gutters as they move through them. Raccoons enter buildings through the roof (using rain gutters, brick chimneys, and overhanging branches to reach the roof); push their way through louvers or soffits; or climb directly up the siding. They may tear shingles, vents, or roofing material to gain entry.
4. Raccoons also cause damage as they feed, pillaging gardens and agricultural crops, knocking over and chewing through garbage cans, getting stuck in dumpsters, pulling down and chewing holes in bird feeders, and pulling up turf and lawns for worms and grubs.
5. Their scat fouls yards and children's play areas and may present a health hazard (parasites found in scat).
6. Disease risks: rabies (they are a rabies vector species in New York), raccoon roundworm. Raccoons are currently the main carrier of rabies in New York.

#### **De-bunking myths about raccoons:**

1. A raccoon that's active during the day is not necessarily rabid. It may be a healthy female that's feeding more often than usual, because of the demands of her young.
2. In raccoons, the symptoms of canine distemper can be easily mistaken for rabies. This leads some people to overestimate the number of rabid raccoons.

#### **Legal status in New York:**

Protected. Game species with set season. Rabies vector species, so you may need to consult with the county health department and follow their guidelines for disposing of the animal.

From ECL 11-0523: "6. Raccoons, coyotes or fox injuring private property may be taken by the owner, occupant or lessee thereof, or an employee or family member of such owner, occupant or lessee, at any time in any manner."

#### **Best practices**

##### **Remove artificial food sources (garbage, compost, bird seed, pet food):**

1. If anyone is feeding the raccoons, persuade them to stop.
2. Put trash out in the morning, instead of the evening, if possible, or keep trash in a protected area.
3. Raccoon-proof garbage cans or dumpsters with a tight-fitting lid (coons seem to have more trouble opening the type of can that has a 4"-high lid that twists on). Secure garbage can with heavy-duty straps or bungee cords, or attach it to a post, or keep it out of reach in the garage (close garage doors at night), or place the can in a covered and secured bin.
4. Feed birds during the fall and winter and gradually stop by May. If the customer really wants to feed birds during the warmer months, install a predator guard on the bird feeder pole. Use sturdy poles. Keep the area underneath the feeder clean.
5. Enclose compost piles in a framed box using hardware cloth or welded wire; in a sturdy container, such as a 55-gallon drum; or in a commercial composter.
6. Feed pets indoors. Any food left outdoors should be removed at night. Pet food bowls should also be brought indoors because they retain attractive odors.

##### **Protect children at play:**

1. Cover children's sandboxes.
2. Teach kids to wash their hands thoroughly after outdoor activity.
3. Wash toys that were used outdoors with a mild bleach solution (10% chlorine bleach, which is one part bleach to nine parts water).
4. Keep kids away from typical raccoon latrine areas (base of trees and wood piles).
5. As best you can, keep kids from putting things in their mouths. Young children may put raccoon scat, wood chips, soil, or other potentially contaminated objects (including their own dirty hands) into their mouths.
6. If there's a known latrine site on the property, you may wish to alter the site conditions to make it less attractive, so the raccoons will stop using it. Remove piles of logs or debris.

##### **Protect vulnerable crops:**

1. Establish a barrier around gardens and fields with a 2-wire electric fence (if allowed by local ordinances) with the wires placed at 5 and 10 inches above the ground. Fences can be turned off during the day. Best to install fences at least two weeks before crops reach an alluring stage, so the coons haven't developed the habit of feeding in the garden or field.
2. Wrap filament tape around ripening ears of corn (tape should have glass-yarn filaments in it so the coons can't tear through it). Remove the tape before eating.
3. One scare device, the Critter Gitter®, combines a siren and flashing lights. It's triggered by a motion detector. The device switches patterns, so it should be effective longer than a scare device that doesn't vary.

##### **Prevent entry into building:**

First step: if there are no definitive signs of coon activity, determine if coons are still inside by plugging the entry hole with newspaper. If the paper is still there when you return two days later, you can begin exclusion. (In the winter, they may be napping, so it may be more difficult to determine whether they're inside or not. Inspect the site as thoroughly as possible.)

**If this is a preventive action, or there are no young present, can:**

1. Replace plastic vents and louvers with metal designs that are securely attached to the building. This is most important for gable louvers, soffit ventilation openings, and roof vents.
2. Half-inch hardware cloth (or, even better, welded wire mesh) or galvanized sheet metal may be used to screen holes, decks, or other vulnerable areas. To protect the area underneath a deck or porch, create a "L"-shaped "rat wall." Attach the hardware cloth to the bottom of the deck. Then bury the bottom 6–12" deep, with a 12" shelf that sticks out, to prevent animals from digging underneath the barrier.
3. Cover chimney flues with commercial caps. Coons can remove some covers, so choose a design that bolts securely to the flue. Raccoons can usually remove the type of chimney cap that simply slips inside the tile liner of the chimney.
4. Trim overhanging tree branches 6–8 ft. away from the house to make it harder for them to reach the roof (if you also want to foil squirrels, trim to 10 ft. away from the building).
5. Attach a 2-ft. wide band of metal flashing around trees at chest height, to prevent raccoons from climbing the trees.

**If young are present, remove the entire family before blocking the entrance to their den:**

1. If the coons are older and mobile, install a one-way door over the entry hole. The mother and young will leave on their own, but won't be able to re-enter. The mother may bring her young to one of her other dens.
2. Trap and release strategies to reduce the risk of orphaning wildlife: The best way to prevent orphaning is to convince your customers to wait until the young are mobile before removing, repelling, or excluding the family from the site. If that's unacceptable, you can try to capture and remove both the female and all of her young and hope that she will retrieve them and continue to care for them. Some NWCOs are trying to refine removal techniques to increase the chances that the female will retrieve her young. Here are their suggestions.
3. Remove the female at dusk or in the evening, preferably using a direct capture technique such as a catchpole. Release them on-site, at dusk or in the evening.
4. Place the female and young in a release box. Many NWCOs use a simple cardboard box, others use a wooden nest box, such as a wood duck box, and some prefer plastic boxes. Use a larger box with at least a 7" hole for raccoons. (One NWCO recommends a 2 × 2 × 1 ft. box.)
5. Make sure the animal cannot immediately get out of the box by covering the hole. Then move them to a quiet place outdoors. Unless they're likely to be disturbed, keep the box at ground level. Remove the cover so the female can get out of the box. Another option is to build a box with a sliding door. Leave the door open about an inch, to keep the heat inside but make it easy for the female to slide it fully open so she can retrieve her young.
6. Some NWCOs prefer to use heated boxes. Make sure that the box doesn't get too hot. You may want to provide heat in just one area. Also, assume that if you put something in the box, they will chew on it. Don't give them access to anything that they shouldn't eat, such as wires. That means that if you choose to use a household heating pad as the heat source, make sure the animals can't reach the wires. To avoid that problem, one NWCO builds his boxes with a double floor, placing the heating pad in the space between the floors. Other options for heat sources include microwaveable heating pads and warm soapstones.
7. If you can't catch the female, put the young in the heated box and locate it as close to the entry site as possible.
8. Check the next day to see if the young are still there. If so, they've probably been abandoned. There hasn't yet been enough research on this technique, so its effectiveness is unknown. It's likely to be more effective with older, more experienced females; younger females might abandon their young more readily.

**Trapping strategies:**

**Live traps:**

1. Ideally, cage trap should be at least 10 × 12 × 32" for a single-door model, longer for double-door models. Bait them with marshmallows or sardines (sardines will attract cats, so be cautious where you use that bait).
2. Place a board (or some other sturdy object) underneath the trap to protect the lawn or roof shingles. The board should be 6–8" wider than the trap, all the way around. Coons often reach outside traps, grabbing and tearing at anything they can get their paws on as they try to escape.
3. New cylindrical foothold trap designs specifically for use with raccoons (Little Grizz Get-rz®, EGG trap®, Duffer trap®) reduce both the chance of catching the wrong species and the chance of the captured coon injuring itself.
4. Traditional foothold traps, #1 or 1 1/2, baited with marshmallows or sardines (if there's a risk of capturing cats, use marshmallows).
5. Foothold traps are not recommended for use inside a building because the captured coon may damage whatever it can reach.

**Lethal traps:**

1. Body-gripping trap, #120, #160 or #220, preferably in a restricted opening set that reduces the risk to dogs and cats (vertical cubby, deep-notch box, or a bucket with a restricted opening). These sets also work well if the entry site is on a building, such as a soffit vent or roof vent. See chapter five for details and other tips that reduce the risk of capturing an unintended animal, such as using a one-way trigger.
2. Modify the trigger to help ensure a top-to-bottom strike (which is more humane) and to prevent the raccoon from refusing to enter the trap. Raccoons don't like to have anything brush against their eyes or whiskers, so separate the trigger and center it on the top or bottom of the trap. Proper positioning helps to ensure a cleaner, more humane catch.

**Preferred killing methods:**

1. CO<sub>2</sub> chamber
2. Lethal trap
3. Shooting, using a shotgun with #6 shot or larger, or a .22 caliber rifle (target the head, if no rabies testing is required, or the heart/lungs)
4. Lethal injection of barbiturate

**Acceptable killing methods:**

1. Stunning and shooting



#### WHAT'S HAPPENING

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Save the date!

ready for use at one time in case they need to move out of an area quickly.

### Was it a raccoon?

You can identify a raccoon with their distinct tracks - they have five toes on the front and hind feet and tracks are usually paired, with the left hind foot placed beside the right forefoot in stride.



### Possible conflicts and solutions

A number of people think they are helping raccoons by feeding them, sustaining their bad behaviour and inevitably end up killing them with kindness. Others will even attempt to keep and raise baby raccoons. It is ILLEGAL to keep raccoons as pets in B.C. and by intentionally feeding them inside or outside the home, people are in fact harming the animals. Download our brochure [Don't feed the animals - Keeping wildlife healthy and wild](#) to learn more or print off and drop in a neighbour's mailbox if you suspect they are feeding raccoons.

If you believe that a baby raccoon has been orphaned (loud sounds coming from young, dead mom on road) contact a [professional wildlife rehabilitator](#) in your area.

Raccoons are not dangerous to people, but when they lose their fear of people, they may be aggressive towards food and injure our pets. If a raccoon approaches you: yell, stamp your feet, clap your hands and make noise to scare the raccoon away. Note that raccoons are NOT rabies carriers in B.C. However, they can carry a roundworm parasite that is very dangerous to humans and is passed through their feces. Wear a protective mask, gloves and clothing when cleaning areas inhabited by raccoons. Raccoon "latrines" are like community bathrooms - sites where multiple raccoons repeatedly deposit fresh feces on top of old feces in a particular area in their environment. It is important to recognize and clean them when they occur near your house, garden, or anywhere children may play.

### Got raccoons? How to encourage them to move along

First, consider the time of year as babies may be in dens starting as early as March. The best time to address resident raccoon problems is before March or after August as the potential to separate a mother from its young is too high. Use mild harassment techniques that are not harmful to the raccoons or their babies. To start, ensure that all potential food sources are eliminated and determine where they may be residing on your property.

Do-it-yourself exclusion techniques are humane and inexpensive, but may take a little patience:

- Place a flashlight or work light in the den site
- Play a radio (with a talk radio station) near the den site
- Place ammonia-soaked rags in a plastic container, tape-shut the lid and punch enough holes in the lid so the smell permeates. Place one or more containers in the den or at the entry points if inside is not accessible. Refill the ammonia as needed every couple days if effect is not working.

In most cases such techniques disturb the raccoons enough that they will want to move out and mothers will even take their babies, one-by-one, to a back-up den site. But you must give them sufficient time to move their young and double check the den before closing up the site.

To prevent raccoons from climbing fruit trees, wrap two-foot-wide sheet metal around the trunk of trees at two feet above the ground and trim branches that are providing other access, such as from rooftops or fences.

Raccoons will frequently roll up new garden sod while looking for bugs. Use non-toxic natural **Diatomaceous Earth** on your lawn to ensure there are no bugs to be found. If a raccoon is raiding your pond, try placing PVC tubes at least 2 ft in length in your pond so the fish can hide inside. Ponds are free buffets for raccoons, herons and other wildlife and none of them know how much you spent on your exotic fish! Nets are dangerous and electrical fences can be harmful. Understand that the wildlife only see your fish as an easy meal so challenge yourself to outsmart them!

No luck on your own? Call the experts - contact a nuisance wildlife management company that uses only exclusion practices and does not trap!

### Trapping is not the solution

Trapping is inhumane, ineffective and restricted by regional wildlife regulations. Even if you use a live trap, relocating a raccoon to another location is usually a death-sentence. The raccoon will be in danger because it is likely now in the territory of another raccoon as they are widely distributed. A large percentage of wildlife that is removed from the city generally does not survive and just moves the problem to someone else's backyard. Raccoons can be injured in traps and even if they were removed, it will only be a matter of time before another raccoon moves in to claim the existing food source and shelter. Poisoning is also inhumane and could also kill other wild animals or pets.

We want to achieve a raccoon population balance within the urban environment based on available natural food supply. In order to do this we need to keep the food supply restricted by cleaning up garbage, and preventing access to pet food. We can learn to live with raccoons by respecting that they are wild animals and treating them as such.

### Prevention is the key to co-existing

- **Never attempt to feed any wildlife as doing so causes them to lose their fear of humans. This makes them more likely to being hit by cars or trapped and killed.**
- Supervise all pets closely outdoors, keeping them indoors from dusk to dawn.
- The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is by making it an indoor pet. An outdoor-enclosed cat run is also an option.
- Maintain sheds, garages and access to crawl spaces and attics to prevent unwelcome tenants.

### Don't feed the raccoons

Make sure you aren't unknowingly making your home an attractive place to stay for raccoons. Check that:

- Garbage bins and composts are secured
- Fruit fallen from trees is not left on the ground
- Bird feeders are not overflowing with seeds
- Pets are fed inside and no pet food is left outside

BC SPCA Locations - A-Z Directory

100 Mile House  
 Abbotsford  
 Alberni-Clayoquot (Port Alberni)  
 Burnaby  
 Campbell River  
 Chilliwack  
 Comox  
 Cowichan  
 Cranbrook (East Kootenay)

Dawson Creek (South Peace)  
 East Kootenay (Cranbrook)  
 Fort St. John (North Peace)  
 Haida Gwaii  
 Kamloops  
 Kelowna  
 Maple Ridge  
 Nanaimo  
 Nelson  
 North Cariboo (Prince George)

North Peace (Fort St. John)  
 Parksville/Qualicum  
 Penticton (South Okanagan Similkameen)  
 Port Alberni (Alberni-Clayoquot)  
 Port Coquitlam Education and Adoption Centre  
 Powell River  
 Prince George (North Cariboo)  
 Prince Rupert

Quesnel  
 Richmond Education and Adoption Centre  
 Salt Spring Island  
 Shuswap  
 South Okanagan Similkameen (Penticton)  
 South Peace (Dawson Creek)  
 Squamish  
 Sunshine Coast  
 Surrey

Trail  
 Vancouver  
 Vernon  
 Victoria  
 West Vancouver  
 Williams Lake  
 Wild ARC (Animal Rehabilitation Centre)

CLINICS

Kamloops Spay/Neuter Clinic  
 Prince George Spay/Neuter Clinic  
 Vancouver Animal Hospital

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## Living with Wildlife: Raccoons

# MANAGING RACCOON PROBLEMS



Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are common throughout California. They are medium sized animals 12-35+ pounds and 20-40 inches long, including a bushy tail with 4 to 7 black rings. The fur has a salt and pepper appearance with the black mask marking on a whitish face characteristic of the species. The tracks of raccoons are very distinctive. The hind foot is long, narrow, and rests flat on the ground like those of a bear. The front paw is hand-like, with toes that are long and well separated.

## BIOLOGY

Raccoons breed mainly in February and March, but mating may occur from December through June. The gestation period is about 63 days. Most litters are born in April or May, but some late-breeding females may not give birth until June, July or August. Raccoons produce one litter per year. The average litter size is 3 to 5 young. The offspring are weaned between 2 and 4 months and usually stay with the female until the following spring. Yearling females do not always breed, but adult females normally breed every year, especially if food is plentiful.

The diet of the raccoon is extremely diverse. They will eat fruit, berries, grain, eggs, poultry; vegetables, nuts mollusks, fish, insects, rodents, carrion, **pet food and garbage**. Individual animals may learn to use specialized foods such as poultry, fruit crops, small livestock or garbage by watching other raccoons. Contrary to popular myth, raccoons do not always wash their food before eating; although they frequently play with their food in water.

Raccoons are nocturnal or nighttime active animals. Urban raccoon populations are frequently underestimated because people seldom see them traveling during the daytime. They are also territorial, particularly the males. Adult males may occupy areas of 3 to 20 square miles; females have a much smaller territory of 1 to 6 square miles. Raccoons den up in hollow trees, drainpipes, homes and buildings, under decks and storage buildings, brush piles, and abandoned burrows.

## DAMAGE

In urban areas, raccoons can damage buildings (particularly attics and roofs), gardens, fruit trees, lawns, garbage cans, and trash containers. They are also attracted to pet food left outdoors and will attack pets. Occasionally, one or more raccoons will establish a communal toilet area. In rural areas, raccoons may feed on farm crops or raid poultry houses.

## DISEASE

All wildlife species including raccoons can carry diseases and parasites. Raccoons are known carriers of rabies (rare), canine distemper, encephalitis, histoplasmosis, trypanosomiasis, coccidiosis, toxoplasmosis, tularemia, tuberculosis, listeriosis, leptospirosis, roundworms and

mange. They can also be infested with fleas, ticks, lice and mites that are known transmitters of disease. Children and pets are particularly at risk.

## PROBLEM PREVENTION

Raccoons are attracted to urban areas by the easy accessibility of food, water and shelter. Reducing or eliminating the availability of all these factors will encourage raccoons to leave.

Tight fitting lids should be kept on garbage cans; pets should be fed during daylight hours and any leftovers removed immediately; water bowls should be emptied or taken in at night; gardens should be frequently harvested and windfall fruit picked up. Food should never intentionally be left out for wild mammals. Raccoons can be excluded from buildings by covering foundation vents with slotted metal vent covers and by using ¼-inch grid screening to cover attic vents and chimneys. They have been known to enter homes through pet doors; be sure these are locked at night. Raccoons sometimes take up residence under a low deck.

They may be excluded by using ¼-inch grid screening or solid metal flashing. Trench around the perimeter of the deck a minimum of 12 inches deep, insert screening in trench, and backfill. Attach top of screening to facade of deck with nails or fence post staples. Before completing final seal on the last entry point, it is wise to make sure no animals are trapped inside. On the night before completing repairs, sprinkle flour in the entrance hole and check for tracks the following morning. If no tracks are evident for three consecutive nights, no animals are likely present. You may wish to make a temporary one-way exit using ¼-inch grid screening. Form the screening into a cone or funnel shape that will permit animals to leave but not to reenter. The large end should be sized to encircle the entry hole and be attached over the hole to the facade of the deck or building with nails or fence post staples. The small end should face away from the house and be 4 to 6 inches in diameter. Raccoons may be kept away from roof areas by trimming tree branches 10 feet from roof and by keeping climbing plants trimmed away from roof and eave areas. Exclusion of raccoons from coops and poultry yards is usually the most practical and effective method to prevent losses. At night, poultry should be kept in raccoon-proof sheds or houses. Ideally, poultry should be confined day and night in a sturdy house combined with a predator-proof outdoor run area. This also provides protection from many other types of predators. Keep in mind that raccoons are good climbers. Moreover, they are strong animals capable of seizing and pushing or pulling objects with considerable force. Usually raccoons are not inclined to break through walls or fences that are intact and in reasonably good condition. Entry is usually made through open, weak or loose places. Raccoons causing lawn and turf damage may be encouraged to leave by controlling the grub worms or other subsoil insects that raccoons eat. Remember the safety of your pets when dealing with chemicals on your lawn.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

It is a violation of California State law for any wildlife to be kept as pets. Only authorized wildlife rehabilitators may keep injured or orphaned wildlife and then only for limited periods of time. California Department of Fish and Game regulations prohibit the relocation of raccoons and other wildlife without written permission from the Department. For further information on the legal status of raccoons and other wildlife, contact your local California Department of Fish and Game Regional Office.

## Help keep your neighborhood healthy and nuisance-free

- Don't feed raccoons, squirrels, pigeons and crows. These animals can find food on their own. Feeding them leads to overpopulation and causes disease to be spread.
- Educate others why it is important not to feed them.
- Keep garbage cans covered.
- Don't leave pet food outside.
- Refrain from feeding birds. Bird seed will attract nuisance animals and rats.
- It is against the law in King County to create conditions that can provide a food source for rodents. (KC BOH code Chapter 8.06)
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance. These animals are not domestic pets!



## RESOURCES

### Living with Wildlife Series

produced by the WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/index.htm>

### PAWS Wildlife Center

Phone: 425-787-2500 ext 817

[http://www.paws.org/wildlife/about\\_center/](http://www.paws.org/wildlife/about_center/)

### How to clean up a raccoon latrine

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/raccoons.aspx>

### Prevent rodent infestations

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthServices/health/ehs/rats.aspx>

### Report rat problems to Public Health

206-205-4394

### King County rodent regulations

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthServices/health/BOH/~media/healthServices/publichealth/documents/boh/BOHCodeTitle8.aspx>



Seattle & King County

Public Health-Seattle & King County  
Environmental Health Services  
Zoonotic Disease Program

206-205-4394

Available in Alternate Formats.



IF YOU CARE  
DON'T FEED US

## Feeding wildlife can cause

- Property damage
- Disease risks
- Attracting rats and mice
- Noise disturbance
- Wild animal bites to you or your pets
- Community litter
- Neighbor disputes



## Neighborhood nuisances & disease carriers

Rats & Mice

Raccoons

Pigeons & Seagulls

Crows

Eastern Grey Squirrels



# Feeding wildlife is unhealthy for your neighborhood!

## Birds

- Wild bird infestations can contribute to environmental diseases.
- Wild birds often carry biting mites that can infest homes.
- Excess bird seed can attract rodents.
- Build up of pigeon or seagull feces can be slippery, smelly, visually unpleasing and cause property damage.
- Large flocks of birds create a noise nuisance for neighbors.

## Eastern Grey Squirrel

- Eastern Grey Squirrels are not native to Washington.
- They are a nuisance and cause property damage by nesting in attics of homes and buildings.
- Prevent squirrel problems by not providing a food source. Eliminate bird feeders when squirrels are a nuisance.

## Rats & Mice

- Rodents carry diseases and pests, and can cause property damage.
- Rodents are attracted by pet food, bird seed, chicken food, tree fruit, garbage, and dog droppings.
- Prevent rodents by plugging holes in buildings and sheds, removing wood piles, and covering garbage cans.
- Don't feed the birds or put pet food outside.

## Raccoons in the Neighbor's Garden

### **Raccoon droppings in Mrs. King's garden**

Mrs. King found a pile of animal droppings at the base of a tree near her garden. While talking with her neighbor about it, he said raccoons use that area as a "latrine", or a place where many raccoons regularly go to the bathroom. The neighbor had been feeding raccoons on his porch for a year. He was surprised to learn that Mrs. King's little dog had been attacked by a raccoon and needed emergency vet care and stitches.

Mrs. King was alarmed to learn that the droppings were from raccoons. As a nurse she knew that raccoon feces carried roundworm eggs. The roundworm eggs could be in her garden soil presenting a risk to her and her young grandson, too.

### **A neighbor's cooperation helps support a healthy environment**

Mrs. King told her neighbor about the hazards that feeding raccoons created. Her neighbor had not been aware of diseases spread by raccoon feces and that feeding raccoons makes them lose their natural fear of people and turn aggressive.

He stopped feeding the raccoons and they eventually left the neighborhood for an area where

they could find food in the wild. Mrs. King paid a wildlife control expert to remove the contaminated soil so she could safely garden and let her grandson play in the yard. Her dog was now safe, too.



Raccoon droppings are cat-sized & may contain seeds and partially-digested berries.



## Raccoon Risks

- Raccoons accustomed to humans often become aggressive and unafraid.
- People and pets can be attacked and bitten; small pets may be killed.
- Raccoon urine spreads the disease leptospirosis which affects people and can be fatal in dogs.
- Their feces spread a dangerous roundworm egg that is especially hazardous for children.
- Raccoon "latrines" contaminate soil, making it unsafe for play or gardening.

## Prevent Raccoon Problems

- **Do not feed raccoons! They can find food on their own.**
- Cover garbage cans securely.
- Properly maintain your compost pile.
- Secure your home so that raccoons can't nest in your attic or crawlspace.
- Secure your pet door so they can't come in your house.



When raccoons are infected with roundworms, their droppings can carry millions of eggs that survive in soil for years.



Swallowing roundworm eggs (on contaminated produce or dirty fingers) can result in serious illness.



## Stash Your Food and Trash

### Allowing coyotes access to human food and garbage is reckless and deadly.

Coyotes primarily hunt rodents and rabbits for food, but will take advantage of whatever is available, including garbage, pet food, and domestic animals.

- Put garbage in tightly closed containers that cannot be tipped over.
- Remove sources of water, especially in dry climates.
- Bring pets in at night, and do not leave pet food outside.
- Put away bird feeders at night to avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey.
- Provide secure enclosures for rabbits, poultry, etc.
- Pick up fallen fruit and cover compost piles.
- Ask your neighbors to follow these tips.

Please respect and protect wild animals. Keep them wild.

[www.keepmewild.org](http://www.keepmewild.org)

### For More Information

Contact the California Department of Fish and Game

Sacramento Headquarters, (916) 653-6420

Northern California, North Coast Region  
Redding, (530) 225-2300

Sacramento Valley, Central Sierra Region  
Rancho Cordova, (916) 358-2900

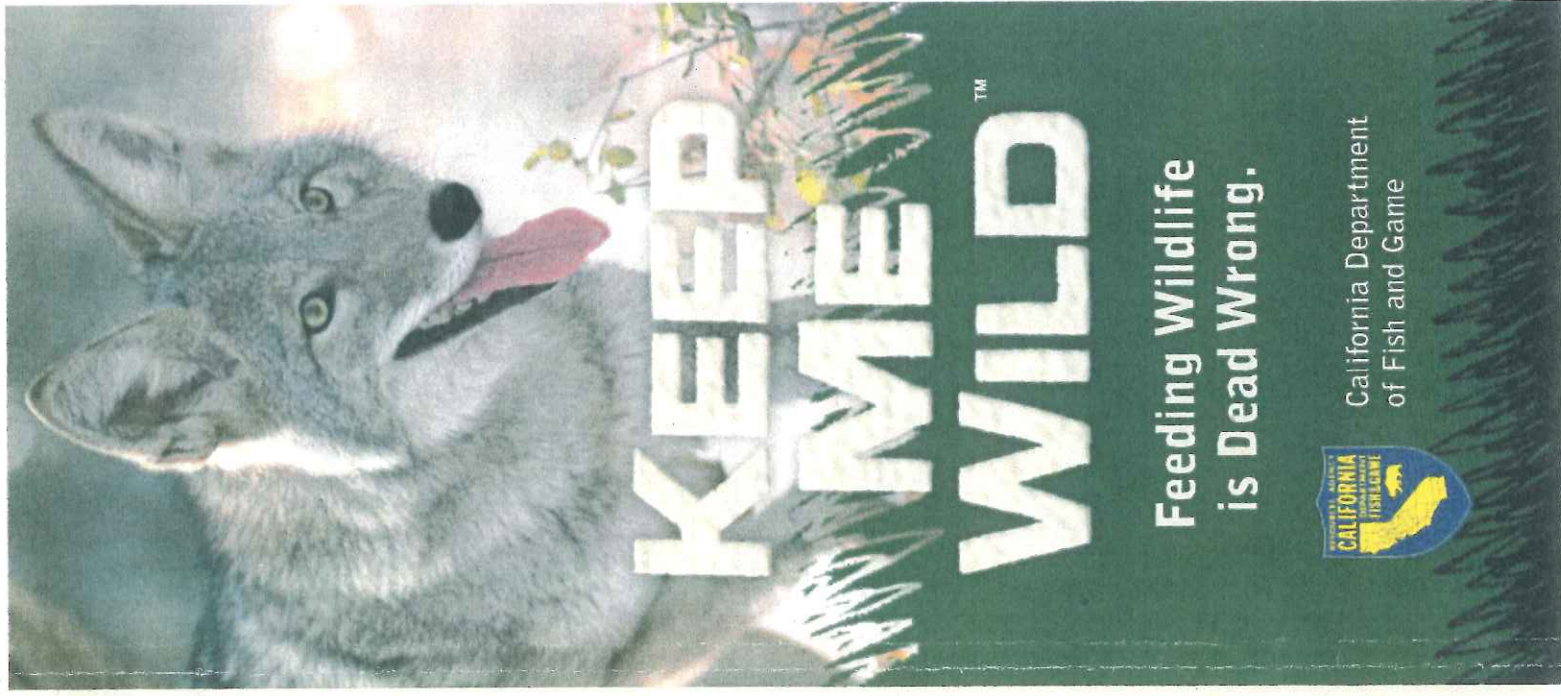
Central Coast Region  
Napa, (707) 944-5500

San Joaquin Valley, Southern Sierra Region  
Fresno, (559) 243-4005 ext. 151

South Coast Region  
San Diego, (858) 467-4201

Eastern Sierra, Inland Deserts Region  
Ontario, (909) 484-0167

Alternate communication formats are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed contact the Department of Fish and Game, (916) 653-6420, [ibernard@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:ibernard@dfg.ca.gov) or the California Relay Service for the deaf or hearing-impaired from TDD phones at (800) 735-2929.



A campaign for all wild animals.

# Wild Animals Ruined, Even Killed by People's Carelessness!

Wild animals are in trouble, and the problem is people who are careless with food and garbage.

Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem, helping to keep rodent populations under control. They are by nature fearful of humans.

If coyotes are given access to human food and garbage, their behavior changes. They lose caution and fear. They may cause property damage. They might threaten human safety. They might be killed.

Relocating a problem coyote is not an option because it only moves the problem to someone else's neighborhood.

Help prevent deadly conflicts for these beautiful wild animals.



A campaign for all wild animals.

## "Coyote country" precautions

- Never feed or attempt to tame coyotes. The result may be deadly conflicts with pets or livestock, or serious injuries to small children.
- Do not leave small children or pets outside unattended.
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Trim ground-level shrubbery to reduce hiding places.
- Be aware that coyotes are more active in the spring, when feeding and protecting their young.
- If followed by a coyote, make loud noises. If this fails, throw rocks in the animal's direction.
- If a coyote attacks a person, immediately contact the nearest Department of Fish and Game or law enforcement office.

## Stash Your Food and Trash



## Coyote-Proof Containers

Use garbage cans that have a locking mechanism on the lid. Use a rope or elastic cord to secure the can to a fence or other solid object so that it cannot be tipped over.



## New Laws

Feeding coyotes is illegal in some communities. Many local ordinances make wildlife feeding punishable by fines and requirements to install wildlife-proof garbage containers.



## Coyote Conflicts

## You Can Help

Please visit [www.KeepMeWild.org](http://www.KeepMeWild.org) for downloadable posters, newspaper advertisements and other Keep Me Wild™ materials.